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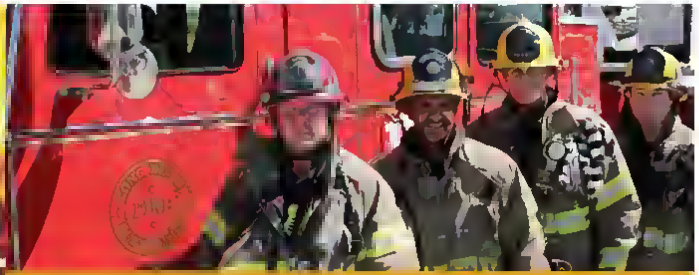

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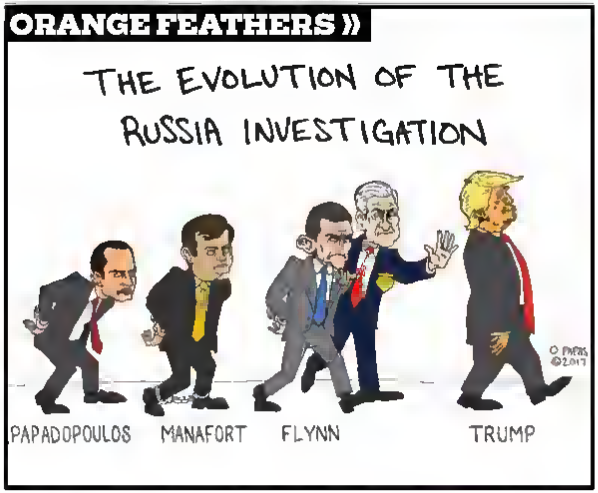
ORANGE FEATHERS »



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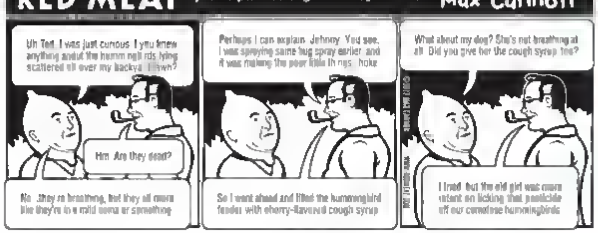
Uh Ted, I was just curious. I you knew anything about the human ash rib, lying scattered all over my backyard, I mean?
Hm. Are they dead?
No...they're breathing, but they all move like they're in a cold coma or something
Perhaps I can explain, Johnny. You see, I was spraying some bug spray earlier, and it was making the poor little things choke
So I went ahead and filled the hummingbird feeder with cherry-flavored cough syrup
What about my dog? She's not breathing at all! Did you give her the cough syrup, too?
I tried, but the old girl was more intent on licking that pesticide off our comatose hummingbirds

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Spare the Rodman

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DESTINATION GENTRIFICATION

"A statistical portrait of gentrification" emerges in a new analysis of California home-mortgage data that included troubling information gleaned from Long Beach, according to the authors.

a clockwork ORANGE
» MATT COKER

The analysis released Dec. 12 by the Greenlining Institute and the National Community Reinvestment Coalition found that most loans in low-income tracts do not go to low-income buyers, say the researchers, who viewed statewide data as well as local statistics for Long Beach, Oakland and Fresno.

"African-American and Latino borrowers continue to receive a disproportionately low share of home purchase and refinance loans, but that's just the tip of the iceberg," says the report's co-author Vedika Ahuja, Greenlining's Economic Equity senior program manager. "We see a lot of home purchase loans in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, but few of them going to low- and moderate-income borrowers."

Among the key findings of "State of Gentrification: Home Lending to Communities of Color in California":

Latinos and blacks together make up 43.8 percent of California's population but only receive 24.2 percent of home purchase loans in the state.

In Long Beach, loans in low- to moderate-income (LMI) census tracts from the top 10 lenders exceeded loans to LMI borrowers by 4:1, suggesting that middle- and upper-income borrowers are displacing lower-income buyers in these neighborhoods. In Oakland, the ratio was roughly 3:1.

Regulators for the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA)—which has led to more than $1 trillion in investments, loans and services to low-income neighborhoods over the past 40 years—are awarding financial institutions CRA credit for extending loans in LMI census tracts, even if the borrower is wealthy.

Statewide, five of the top 10 home purchase lenders were non-banks. These lenders are not subject to the CRA and may be undercapitalized. In addition, non-bank lenders have effectively marketed to low-income and immigrant communities, who may be more vulnerable to predatory lending.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"I've been trying to tell Donald since day one: 'Come talk to me, man. … I'll tell you what the Marshal wants more than anything. … It's not even that much,'" says NBA Hall of Famer and sometime Newport Beach resident Dennis Rodman on his "friends" Donald Trump and "the Marshal," Kim Jong Un, in *The Guardian* on Monday.

Pressed by the U.K. newspaper for more details, Rodman reportedly replied, "I ain't telling you. … I will tell [Trump] when I see him."

The Worm's fifth trip to North Korea was sponsored by PotCoin, a bitcoin-like digital currency aimed at transactions between legal marijuana users and merchants, which posted on its website that Rodman is in "the very rare position to be able to claim longtime friendships" with Kim and Trump.

The latter relationship apparently comes from the ex-basketball star's stint as a *Celebrity Apprentice* contestant, but Trump tweeted on May 7, 2014, "Dennis Rodman was either drunk or on drugs (delusional) when he said I wanted to go to North Korea with him. Glad I fired him on *Apprentice*!"

YOU CAN'T MAKE THIS SHIT UP

The former security manager at the American Junkie nightclub in Newport Beach has been charged with supplying drugs to patrons, causing multiple overdoses and one overdose death, according to authorities.

Sean Robert McLaughlin, 43, of Aliso Viejo, is also accused of holding a woman against her will in his American Junkie office and supplying her with ecstasy—a month before the four men he'd allegedly plied with cocaine laced with fentanyl were hospitalized.

Newport Beach Fire Department paramedics responded to a medical-distress call at the nightspot at 2406 Newport Blvd. after 1 a.m. in November 2016, they sent the club patrons to local hospitals for treatment. Ahmed Said, 25, of Santa Ana, died at 7:06 that same morning at Huntington Beach Hospital.

After McLaughlin was booked into the Newport Beach Police Department jail that night for suspected involuntary manslaughter, further investigation uncovered the September 2016 incident with the woman.

There is no mention of manslaughter in the Orange County district attorney's office announcement about the charges that were filed against McLaughlin on Dec. 8. They are: four felony counts of sale/transportation of a controlled substance, a single felony count of sale/transportation of ecstasy, a misdemeanor count of false imprisonment and four sentencing enhancements for inflicting great bodily injury.

A conviction could send him to state prison for 16 years. At press time, he was being held in lieu of $500,000 bail.

MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

GOD HELP US

BOB AUL

POLITICAL FOOTBALL
» STEVE LOWERY

New England Patriots (10-3) vs. Pittsburgh Steelers (11-2)

New England update: Most people think Boston when they think of the Patriots, but the team actually represents all of New England: a region of majestic beauty and soaring passive-aggressiveness. It's also famous for its political independence, as it's home to senators Bernie Sanders and Sue Collins, the latter a Republican whose *no* vote helped scuttle health care "reform" and who recently announced she will vote against her party's tax bill if middle-class families are not protected. You know who really didn't care if the middle class was protected? Irvine Congresswoman Mimi Walters, who really put the "un" in uncaring when she voted for a tax bill that also took away a deduction for wildfire victims *while* her state was *on fire*.

Pittsburgh update: Very nice, Pittsburgh is way underrated. … Walters, on the other hand, claims her support is conditional, but any attempt on her part to paint herself an independent was scuttled when Darrell Issa and Dana Rohrabacher, neither of whom has ever been accused of political courage or, in Rohrabacher's case, sanity, each voted against the tax bill. And who the hell thought the wildfire provision was needed in the first place? Exactly who was frothing at the mouth, screaming, "Listen up, fat-cat wildfire victims! You've lost everything; your lives are literally in ruins. The gravy train ends now!" *Daaaaamn*, I mean I knew the Republican brand is all about cruelty and heartlessness and blaming the powerless and squeezing the poor and thumping the Bible and claiming the moral high ground while defending dudes who assault women and 14-year-old girls and cutting health benefits for children and cancer victims: sure, but even I didn't think they were capable as a party at kicking people not only when they were down, but also when they were down and currently *on fire*!

Consensus: Pittsburgh's pitch-and-catch combo of quarterback Ben Roethlisberger and receiver Antonio Brown has been on fire this season. Walters just voted to garnish their wages. Go Steelers!

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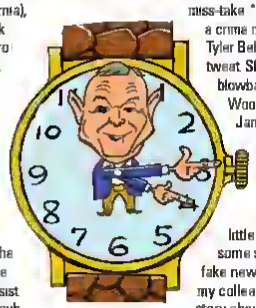
She's a Man, Baby!

» MATT COKER

On Dec. 8, Netflix posted the last *Chelsea* episode taped before a Studio City audience. The *final* final episode after two seasons goes up Friday, with celebrity friends sitting around a dinner table at host Chelsea Handler's Bel-Air home. But the first guest on the previous in-studio installment was former U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer (D-California), who was mostly there to talk about the moment of time produced by Harvey Weinstein, intrepid reporters and the #metoo movement.



BOB AUL

Handler, who announced in October she was leaving *Chelsea* to focus solely on liberal-feminist activism, asked near the end of the chat about PAC for a Change, Boxer's newish political-action committee. The former senator mentioned the PAC for a Change project Resist & Replace, aims to defeat Republicans at the ballot box in 2018, that it is starting in California and that its first video targets Representative Dana Rohrabacher (R-a Putin Colon Polyp). (See "From Russia With Love" here: https://youtu.be/eW5H7H6drsA.)

During the anti-Rohrabacher chatter, Handler was uncharacteristically silent, which made me wonder if that had something to do with the gaffe she made two weeks after announcing she was ending *Chelsea* when she tweeted: "So, Republican Rep. Dana Rohrabacher from California is was [sic] the original person who received info from Russia because she works w/ them."

Misidentifying the sex of someone who has been an elected official in California since 1989 is not the best way to launch a political activism career, as witnessed by the critics who immediately pounced on Handler. "Rep. Rohrabacher is a man. But way to assume their gender," stated one commenter to a Breitbart story on Handler's miss-take. "Using the wrong pronoun is a crime in California isn't it?" replied Tyler Bell (@tylerbell49) to Handler's tweet. She even received Hollywood blowback from actor James Woods (verified account @RealJamesWoods): "She would be a perfect political analyst for @CNN. Why break their streak on being wrong on just about everything?"

Not that Handler needs little ol' *OC Weekly* to cut her some slack, but it would be fake news of us not to bring up my colleague R. Scott Moxley's story about the Robert F. Kennedy assassination. Corcoran State Prison and Sirhan Sirhan's surprise visitor: "Diana Rohrabacher." With that swirling around in the news-sphere, it's small wonder that the *Economic Times* of India and the Dinar Vets forum, a self-described "trusted and reliable resource" on the Iraqi currency, want on to misidentify Rohrabacher as a "congresswoman" and "she," respectively.

GOT DANA WATCH FODDER?
Email mcoker@ocweekly.com

HeyYou!

» ANONYMOUS

Mexican-Hating Handicap

You're the editor who never should have wasted ink nor paper on the recent Hey, You! titled "Dissed Abled." It's obvious you don't have any handicapped people at your newspaper. I believe the person who wrote this is upset that a handicapped person has a Tesla. I am handicapped and have never touched a Tesla! Sometimes, all the handicapped spaces are taken up by handicapped people...so you park like everyone else does. Duh! Also, most of your articles are anti-white, pro-illegal Mexican who dug under the border fence to get here. Pull your head out of your ass. It's not a sombrero!

BOB AUL

HEY, YOU! Send anonymous thanks, confessions or accusations—changing or deleting the names of the guilty and innocent—to "Hey, You!" c/o *OC Weekly*, 18475 Bandilier Circle, Fountain Valley, CA 92708, or email us at letters@ocweekly.com.

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OC'S MYSTERY FORENSIC SCIENCE THEATER

Has Orange County's Crime Lab fabricated scientific analysis to help prosecutors win murder cases?

BY R. SCOTT MOXLEY

CHAPTER ONE

Except for a disturbing fact—the presence of Nicholas, a bloody, bound, diaper-soiled, crying 2-year-old sitting on the kitchen floor without supervision—Catherine Ann Tameny's modest one-bedroom apartment situated between the Disneyland and Knott's Berry Farm amusement parks looked deceptively neat upon opening the front door.

Tameny's worried mother, Carolyn, and her stepfather, John, entered the rental at 10:15 on a Monday morning after she'd failed to show up for work as a $5-per-hour clerk at a Costa Mesa computer business. Though she liked to party, the 20-year-old single mother was usually punctual. Her friends loved her warmth and enthusiasm for weekend cruising of Los Angeles' Sunset Boulevard.

But Tameny felt she wasn't pretty enough for dates. Perhaps to make up for her lack of confidence, she drank booze, inhaled cocaine and battled to quit a Virginia Slims habit. The fact that she hadn't taken Nicholas to a 6:30 a.m. babysitting appointment set to last until the end of her work shift gave her parents a second reason for alarm.

A coming discovery turned the family's plan to attend a California Angels baseball game that evening against the Seattle Mariners into a footnote for a tragic day. Carolyn comforted Nicholas, whose swollen hands had been tied behind his back, while John entered the bedroom and quickly exited.

"Don't go in there," he said. "Call 911."

Minutes later, Anaheim Police Department (APD) officers found a bloodless homicide scene inside a ransacked bedroom. A phone line had been severed and a sliding glass door left open. Tameny would never arrive for her long-scheduled, upcoming two-night reservation at the Sheraton Plaza Hotel in Palm Springs.

She lay face up on the bed, her arms extended out from her body. Her spread knees dangled over the edge of an off-kilter mattress, and her gold-colored cross pendant rested in her hair. Tameny's nightgown had been pulled up toward her breasts, exposing an otherwise-nude corpse. Though she was known as a tidy person, her panties containing a biological link to a male sat uncharacteristically out of place on the bathroom floor.

The murder weapon, a black electrical cord attached to a nearby Radio Shack Realistic alarm clock, crisscrossed her neck. The makeshift ligature likely caused unconsciousness within 20 seconds and death in about a minute or two, if yanked powerfully enough. While detectives knew the killer had strangled his 5-foot-5, 138-pound victim, they suspected a sexual assault gone terribly wrong on Aug. 5, 1985.

At about noon, Loren Sugarman, a veteran forensic scientist with the Orange County Sheriff's Department (OCSD), began collecting biological and trace evidence. Sugarman took multiple swabs of Tameny's vaginal, anal and breast regions—samples that would eventually become critical and controversial. He stored the material in tubes for laboratory examination techniques available in the mid-1980s.

The following morning, Dr. Richard Fukumoto, a forensic pathologist, performed an autopsy, reporting abrasions to Tameny's throat and chin. He also said pressure from the strangulation caused petechial hemorrhages—bursts of small blood vessels called capillaries—in her face, eyes, mouth and throat while she was alive. Within two hours before the killing, she'd suffered circular bruises on her knees as well as on an ankle. Her blood showed no signs of alcohol or illicit drugs. Fukumoto concluded, "She died of asphyxiation."

Sugarman's crime-scene collections landed with Daniel Gammie, an OCSD criminalist, about two months after the murder. Gammie didn't detect semen from the victim's anal or oral swabs. He did find amylase, an enzyme found in saliva, on her right breast and determined Tameny engaged in intercourse before her death given that her vagina contained spermatozoa. Noting "the [recovered] semen concentration and sperm density were very low," Gammie ruled in a Sept. 26, 1985, memo sent to APD detectives trying to create a timeline that "*the semen was not deposited at or near the time of death*" (our emphasis).

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Despite intense police efforts to solve the case, the murder fell into cold-case status. In those pre-DNA-analysis days, the identity—or identities—of who deposited the saliva and sperm would become an official mystery for two decades. Examiners retested the old collections in 2006. Using significant technological advancements, they unmasked the man who left the sperm, Larry Herrera, and the one who left the saliva, Wendell Lemond.

But who was the killer? Herrera, the victim's secret lover police were told had a "kinky" streak? Lemond, the victim's coworker who wasn't helpful about how his saliva landed on Tameny's breast? Or an unknown person?

Hours after the Monday-morning discovery of Tameny's body, Herrera gave police shifting answers about exactly when—was it Saturday or Sunday?—he'd last seen the victim and even how he'd arrived at her apartment for sex. The inconsistencies didn't bother eventual prosecutor Howard Gundy in large part because of Gammie's 1985 finding that the sperm deposit didn't occur *at or near the time of the victim's death*, a finding that left Lemond the last suspect standing.

Gammie's name and forensic report were intriguingly never mentioned at Lemond's 2009 murder trial in Superior Court Judge Frank F. Fasel's Santa Ana courtroom. The testimonial chore fell to Mary Hong, a forensic scientist and then a rising star in the OC Crime Lab. Hong firmly testified in agreement with the 1985 conclusion, adding Herrera's sperm deposit likely happened more than 24 hours before it was collected by authorities at the crime scene. The jury spent less than four hours deliberating before convicting Lemond, who received a prison term of 25 years to life. His home is now San Quentin State Prison.

But two people had a major problem with Hong and Gammie's supposedly scientific finding against Lemond. Hong and Gammie.

Incredibly, a year earlier in the *same Orange County courtroom* (C35) with the *same judge* (Fasel) in yet a different 1985 Anaheim cold-case murder trial—*People v. Lynn Dean Johnson*, the duo used near-identical semen-recovery conditions to argue it was impossible to give a scientific opinion it had been deposited at least a day earlier. Gammie and Hong told jurors there are too many variables in male sperm production—for example, age, health, number of recent ejaculations and how it degrades—to determine that low sperm density and concentration always means a distant deposit timewise. That contradictory shift in analysis, which caused no fanfare because nobody at the time knew of the sly switch, helpfully matched the government's desire to convict Johnson.

In simple terms, there was OC Crime Lab's original Gammie finding, its 2008 flip-flop in *Johnson*, and then the 2009 flip-flop on the flip-flop quietly back to the 1985 analysis for *Lemond*.

On Nov. 20, Judge Cheri Pham appointed the Federal Public Defender to represent the inmate and gave the DA's office a Dec. 29 deadline to file a brief on whether prosecutors "failed to disclose material exculpatory and impeachment evidence" to the defense.

CHAPTER TWO

Given the sustained popularity of fictional television shows such as *CSI* and heroic crime-lab characters who solve investigations in less than an hour, juries in Orange County and throughout the nation routinely give considerable weight to criminalists' testimony translating mind-numbingly complex forensic-science issues into understandable meanings. There's also an embedded assumption that forensic scientists are uniformly competent, honest and unbiased. In other words, though crime labs are often wings of law-enforcement agencies—as it is in OC—their employees aren't expected by citizens to sabotage defense attorneys or favor prosecution teams.

But ever-increasing numbers of wrongful criminal convictions based largely on faulty forensic-science testimony prompted the National Research Council (NRC) to publish a 2009 report, *Strengthening Forensic Science In the United States: A Path Forward*, which applauded "the scores of talented and dedicated people in the forensic science community ... who have produced valuable evidence that has led to the successful prosecution and conviction of criminals as well as to the exoneration of innocent people." Their research also left them alarmed, noting "the forensic science system, encompassing both research and practice" poses serious problems for the criminal-justice system. They observed that "faulty science analyses" has convicted innocent people even in death penalty cases.

"This fact has demonstrated the potential danger of giving undue weight to evidence and testimony derived from imperfect testing and analysis," the group stated. "Moreover, imprecise or exaggerated expert testimony has sometimes contributed to the admission of erroneous or misleading evidence .... The simple reality is that the interpretation of forensic evidence is not always based on scientific studies to determine its validity."

In supporting their stance, the NRC cited the unwillingness of "some" in the forensic science community to acknowledge imperfections despite the chronic emergence of historical evidence. The Detroit police crime lab botched at least 10 percent of its ballistic evidence analysis; a West Virginia lab employee handling more than 100 cases falsified results that caused juries to convict defendants, a Texas Department of Public Safety audit found the Houston Police Department's crime lab "was presenting findings in a misleading manner designed to unfairly help prosecutors obtain convictions", the Innocence Project, which has freed 351 innocent prisoners after DNA undercut criminalists' trial assertions, discovered proof some government lab workers across the country performed "drylabbing," or offering juries fake conclusions of tests that never occurred.

Even the FBI, which celebrates an international reputation for crime lab proficiency, didn't escape the Council's scorn. It cited the case of Oregon's Brandon Mayfield, whom agents arrested for his alleged participation in the 2004 Madrid train bombings. It took two weeks for Mayfield to win release from custody after agency officials reluctantly conceded they had employed erroneous fingerprint analysis. According to the Council, the problem wasn't necessarily the evidence, "but rather the bias and circular reasoning of the FBI examiners."

CHAPTER THREE

Seventy-one days before Tameny's August 1985 murder, 19-year-old Bridgett Lamon unwittingly worked her last shift at the Acapulco Restaurant on South Harbor Boulevard in Anaheim before encountering a vicious, sexually deviant killer holding a hammer. Lamon loved her job. Though her co-workers considered her nice, some of them felt her ditzy. "Valley girl" personality and slow diction wasn't ideal for the hostess position. She routinely left work wearing her uniform, but at 9:30 p.m. on May 25, a Saturday on a Memorial Day weekend, she changed into a black shirt and white pants with black polka dots before heading to an unknown location for a date.

Her closest friends said she liked to party at bars into the wee hours of the morning. They would tell homicide detectives she drank heavily, smoked pot, snorted cocaine, slammed heroin and took acid trips. Though she was in the early stages of pursuing a semi-resistant boyfriend, there's no doubt she unabashedly engaged in sexual relations with a long list of male acquaintances, including ones who picked her up while she hitchhiked North Orange County streets. One man, a 21-year-old Pizza Hut employee who'd been suspected of a 1984 indecent exposure crime, acknowledged to police he found her walking on Ball Road not far from Angel Stadium in 1982 and, weeks later, they had sex in his red 1976 Ford F-100 while parked at her mother's trailer-park residence.

Such tales included experiences involving Lamon's sister. According to an APD report obtained by *OC Weekly*, the woman claimed "a wetback-type Mexican" driving a yellow Volkswagen tried to contact her sibling a week before the murder. She told the man her sister wasn't home, and the Mexican supposedly replied, "Can I buy you?" Lamon later explained that man had once given her a ride home.

Another admirer—this one a tall, lanky male of German descent with a wart on

his nose—called the Acapulco Restaurant nightly during the month before the killing to see if Lamon was working. Tracked by police to Arcadia, where he lived with his mother, he initially gave robbery/homicide unit detectives several lies about the extent of their relationship, which included hair dates, but wouldn't budge on his insistence that he'd last seen her before her final work shift. She'd borrowed his car the night before, wrecked the engine and, in the company of a bearded, late-30s white male driving a gold 1984 or '85 Ford Mustang convertible, arrived mid-afternoon on May 25 to inform him he could find the disabled vehicle in Huntington Beach close to the Pacific Ocean. Later, receiving her paycheck, she bought a new outfit and headed for her last shift.

At 8:20 a.m. on Sunday, May 26, a 48-year-old Yorba Linda man searching for boxes left in dumpsters at an Anaheim industrial park near a noisy section of Orangethorpe Avenue and railroad tracks originally thought he'd found a mannequin, then decided the body was a dead, seminude female. He drove to a nearby Texaco gas station, walked into a phone booth and called 911. Responding APD officers found the body inside a three-sided trash alcove. Given the mutilation, it took seven hours to positively identify the remains as belonging to Lamon, who, according to blood analysis, had likely consumed at least seven or eight 12-ounce beers in the hours before her 3 a.m. killing.

Prosecutor Kevin Haskins accurately told a 2008 jury that the victim's final minutes alive were terrifying, citing defensive wounds to the palms of her hands as evidence she knew she was going to die before attempting to flee, getting caught and suffering at least two initial steel-claw hammer blows to the back of her head. After the killer caught her, he bound her ankles with rope, raped her, and slammed the hammer into her face and chest, breaking ribs and shattering her skull in 12 different places.

Arriving police officers found not just a shockingly brutal crime scene, but also a bizarre one. The killer took the time to stage Lamon's body. Perhaps in hopes of masking the actual location of the homicide before a final resting spot, he'd wrapped an apricot-colored satin bed sheet around her upper body. As APD detectives removed the bloody layers, they found a 13-gallon, white plastic garbage bag encasing the crushed head, then another wrapping—a yellow terry-cloth robe—and lastly yet another white plastic garbage bag. The final image repulsed even hardened cops.

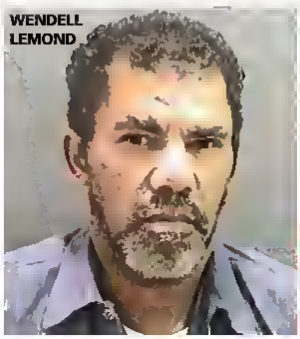
As he had in the Tameny murder investigation, the crime lab's Gammie analyzed the sperm deposits in Lamon's vagina and concluded in June 1985, with his supervisor's concurrence, "Semen concentrations and sperm densities were low and, therefore, indicated that the semen was not deposited at or near the time of death." In 2004, DNA analysis could not exclude Lynn Dean Johnson as the depositor. But given the victim's promiscuity and the aim of Tony Rackauckas' district attorney's office (OCDA) to give Johnson the death penalty, Haskins wanted the rape and murder happening simultaneously, meaning Gammie's report needed to be discredited.

Inside Fasel's court in June 2008, jurors heard Hong testify that the window for the sperm deposit was "zero to 24 hours" before collection, as opposed to more than 24 hours. Haskins highlighted the assertion, asking her if she agreed with Gammie's 1985 finding. "No," Hong replied. "I don't agree with it because there are many variations in the amount of semen that might be deposited."

By this point, Gammie didn't agree with himself either. Under direct examination by Haskins, Gammie said his 1985 conclusion had been erroneous. His stance that low semen concentrations and sperm densities putting distance between the deposit and the killing was, he now said, "unreliable" to help solve a crime. "In other words, the premise was that high concentrations of semen indicated more recent activity [while] lower concentrations indicate more time has taken place [between deposit and collection]," Gammie said. "However, we found that in cases where we did know that interval, those concentrations weren't consistent. We did not see that pattern of short interval producing high concentrations, long intervals producing low. It didn't correlate directly."

Haskins, a former San Clemente life-

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 12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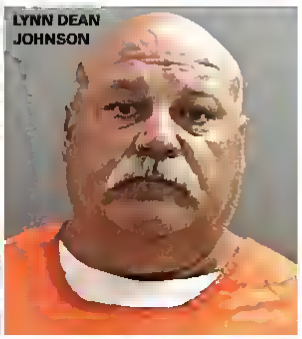
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guard, had the scientific testimony he wanted. He ridiculed assistant public defenders Lisa Kopelman and Scott Sanders for questioning of Gammie, whom the prosecutor said should have been treated with reverence. He even compared the OC lab worker to luminaries of science such as Galileo and Copernicus. "How was Galileo rewarded for his efforts? Much like Mr. Gammie, he was attacked as a heretic, as a liar, as a deluded idiot," said Haskins, who also mocked the defense for labeling Hong "the queen bee of conspirators" and "the liar of all liars."

The show almost worked perfectly. Though Haskins, who is now a judge, won a conviction against Johnson—a construction worker with a criminal history that included sex crimes, but whose fingerprints didn't match those found at the Lamon crime scene—he lost efforts to put him on death row after the defense successfully raised lingering doubts with the jury during the penalty phase. Johnson is in a state prison east of Stockton, serving a sentence of life in prison without the possibility of parole.

In 2010, the California Court of Appeal backed the conviction, though Justice Richard M. Aronson stated Fasel shouldn't have blocked the defense from informing the jury that another suspect, Fred Lunsford, told his roommate and his brother that after picking up Lamon at the Mississippi Moonshine bar, he "hurt" the woman "around the time of the murder."

But the appellate justices didn't know a critical fact. Fifty-seven weeks after Hong testified in *Johnson*, she gave her flip-flop performance in *Lemond*. Gundy asked the lab worker if the jury could scientifically believe Herrera's semen deposit in Tameny had been made 24 hours before collection.

"Yes," Hong replied. "As time increases from the time of ejaculation to the time of the collection, we typically find less sperm."

CHAPTER FOUR

The alarming 2009 forensic-science findings resulted in a more in-depth review, which produced a 174-page report by the National Commission on Forensic Science (NCFS) in 2016. The distinguished panel found significant "shortfalls" in forensic-science practices, particularly "faulty expert testimony" used by prosecutors to win convictions. "Developments over the past two decades—including the exoneration of defendants who had been wrongfully convicted based in part on forensic-science evidence, a variety of studies of the scientific underpinnings of the forensic disciplines, reviews of expert testimony based on forensic findings, and scandals in state crime laboratories—have called increasing attention to the question of the validity and reliability of some important forms of forensic evidence and of testimony based upon them," the panel declared.

As an Alabama U.S. Senator, Jeff Sessions, a former federal prosecutor and current U.S. Attorney General, dismissed such criticism. The *Washington Post*'s Radley Balko reported in April that Sessions claimed law-enforcement officials had been using "proven scientific principles" for years. Never mind that even the FBI has conceded serious issues. For example, in 2015, the agency reported that its forensic scientists had routinely botched hair-analysis testimony at trials and that in 95 percent of those cases, the errors favored prosecutors.

Balko—a veteran journalist who covers criminal justice, the drug war and civil liberties and has authored *Rise of the Warrior Cop* and *Dr. Death and the Country Dentist: A True Story of Corruption and Injustice in the American South*—urges DA offices to help institute reforms. "[We've] got an entire profession of experts who were willing to say things that actual scientists wouldn't," he wrote earlier this year. "We need prosecutors honest enough to resist the temptation to seal convictions with charlatanism masquerading as expertise."

CHAPTER FIVE

In Orange County's jailhouse-informant scandal, Sanders credited luck with a majority of his discoveries of corruption inside the DA's office, sheriff's department and local police agencies. Law-enforcement officials here secretly used unconstitutional plots with snitches to win convictions. They also hid exculpatory evidence from juries and committed perjury to mask their misdeeds, as the California Court of Appeal has recognized. Such government cheating has blown at least 17 felony cases to date.

Luck struck in the OC Crime Lab mess, too. In the summer of 2016—at the height of the snitch scandal, a relative of Lemond contacted Sanders. This person read in newspaper accounts about Gundy's embarrassing role in that controversy and asked if the prosecutor could have mishandled the murder case. The question prompted Sanders to study Tameny's trial, where he learned for the first time that Hong had given contradictory scientific analysis in the two cases.

"Should it really take an informant scandal to find out that the key forensic expert in two murder cases switched her opinion?" Sanders asked. "It's been almost 10 years since Hong did this, so obviously, she was content to let these defendants die in prison without ever revealing what she had done. It's beyond sick. [In] how many other cases has she adjusted her opinion so it could work for the prosecution?"

CHAPTER SIX

Hong did not respond to requests seeking an explanation for her flip-flops. If it's true she worked as a stooge for prosecutors, she hasn't been held accountable. She left the OC lab in 2016. Nowadays, she runs two crime labs for the California Department of Justice.

RSCOTTMOXLEY@OCWEEKLY.COM

*calendar

COURTESY OF KNOTT'S BERRY FARM

fri/12/15

[CONCERT]

HEEEERE'S JONNY!

The Drums

They've had their ups and downs—their licks and snares?—but after the amicable departure of Drums co-founder Jacob Graham in 2016, Jonny Pierce came through with a bracing fourth album this summer. The aptly titled *Abysmal Thoughts* is pop and heartbreak, pop and catastrophe, pop in collapse, and pop as [illegible] well, if not redemption, then at least the kind of paradoxical laughter that means you've finally got nothing left to lose. The sound of the Smiths is still there, but Pierce taps into the messy-on-purpose power of New Zealanders such as the Clean and the gloriously dolorous Verlaines, and the result is a confessional delivered with that precise sort of mordant wit that makes the darkness suddenly seem a little less powerful.

The Drums with Hoops at the Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com. 8 p.m. $20. —CHRIS ZIEGLER

[FILM]

Bad But Brilliant

The Room

With a James Franco-directed and -starring feature dramatizing the tragicomic production behind "the worst movie ever made," that should be incentive to finally go out and see this epic train wreck of a film, right? Well, there's no better way to see it than a traditionally immersive screening experience, gleefully provided by the Frida Cinema. This month's screening party will also be Christmas themed, so audience members are encouraged to throw their plastic spoons at the screen while wearing their best ugly Christmas sweater. Otherwise, enjoy all the hilarious quirks, witness the bombastically bad line readings, and marvel at the audacity of Tommy Wiseau to produce something so lost in its own disastrous fervor it became legendary.

The Room: Holiday Edition at the Frida Cinema, 305 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana, (714) 285-9422, thefridacinema.org. 11 p.m. $7-$10. —AIMEE MURILLO

sat/12/16

[SHOPPING]

TAKE THE HI-FI ROAD

Long Beach Record Swap

Music is something we all need, no matter which genre or style we prefer. Audiophiles who are sound and quality purists might take listening formats and mediums more seriously than others, but collecting and discovering music is a fun endeavor for all. Whether you're searching for something to play on your own turntables or for that lost album on a best friend's wish list, the Long Beach Record Swap at Alex's Bar will be the space to scope out new and used 45s and LPs in all genres. And while you search for the perfect record, rock & roll vinyl queen DJ Lola Cherry Cola will spin hot tunes and $1 tacos (including vegan options) will be ready to fuel you.

Long Beach Record Swap at Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com. 1 p.m. Free. 21+. —AIMEE MURILLO

[PUB CRAWLS]

Bottoms Up!

12 Bars of Xmas: A Very Tiki Xmas Pub Crawl

The folks who organize the annual 12 Bars of Xmas event in downtown Fullerton—among them, John Pantle of Skapeche Mode and Tbone Willy of Starpool—have something new in their bag of toys this season. This year's pub crawl theme is a Polynesian tiki theme, so dress in your best tropical attire, Santa hats, Hawaiian shirt or grass skirts as you bounce from bar to bar for holiday libations. The list of participating bars had yet to be released at press time, but you can keep abreast via its Facebook community page. The final stop in this merry trail will feature live performances by Unicorn Injection and a special guest, so come lift your spirits with some spirits—responsibly, of course. *Mahalo!*

12 Bars of Xmas: A Very Tiki Xmas Pub Crawl in downtown Fullerton, www.facebook.com/12barsofxmas. 5 p.m. Free. 21+. —AIMEE MURILLO

sun/12/17

[CONCERT]

Santa Slays

Merry Mayhem III

There probably isn't a better title to sum up a holiday-themed heavy-metal showcase. This annual all-ages fest at DiPiazza's brings together some exceptional tribute groups—namely, Black Sabbath tribute Hole In the Sky and Corrosion of Conformity tribute Wiseblood—as well as bands Pat & Ty, Bloom, Gypsy Mountain Star, Wrath & Redemption, and Black Snak. DiPiazza's regular menu of Italian pasta and pies will also be available at this event, brought to you by the fine folks at the Underground, a community focused on promoting stellar bands and building camaraderie among groups and fans in the SoCal music scene.

Merry Mayhem III at DiPiazza's, 5205 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach, (562) 498-2461, www.facebook.com/theunderground2012. 4:30 p.m. $7. —AIMEE MURILLO

[ART]

They Found It!

'Eureka'

Take a short course in design with branding divas Amy and Jennifer Hood, curators of a new show at Irvine's Great Park Gallery, itself part of a nifty experiment in land use, design and renovation arguably reflective of themes explored in "Eureka." This exhibit is a survey of how advertisements, posters, packaging, magazines, signs and more have created images and imaginings of a story and lifestyle, sales pitch or dream, often celebrating real achievements along with idealized renderings of the history of California. The Newport Beach sisters offer their professional, smart, idealized, strategic if often beautiful, critical and aesthetic take via work from three dozen influential designers.

"Eureka, A California Design Story With the Hoods and Friends" at Great Park Gallery at Palms Court Arts Complex, 6950 Marine Way, Irvine, (949) 724-6000, www.cityofirvine.org. 10 a.m. Through Feb. 11, 2018. Free. —ANDREW TONKOVICH

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mon/12/18

[FAMILY EVENTS]

Very Merry!

Knott's Merry Farm

The stockings have been hung on the chimney with care, and Ol' Saint Nick isn't climbing down to deliver gifts and goodies just yet. So take a break with the kiddos and head to the annual Knott's Merry Farm! The Peanuts gang will be in tow to perform a rousing Christmas show at the Calico Mine Stage, Santa's Christmas Cabin will be open for visits, and the nightly Snow and Glow snowfall will truly make it feel like a vacation at the North Pole. New this year is Knott's Christmas Pizza (see Eat This Now in our Food section) and handmade chicken and beef tamales, among other seasonal delicacies and treats. Come out and make it the merriest holiday yet!

Knott's Merry Farm at Knott's Berry Farm, 8039 Beach Blvd., Buena Park, (714) 220-5200, www.knotts.com. 10 a.m. Through Jan. 7, 2018. $49-$79. —AIMEE MURILLO

tue/12/19

[TRIVIA]

Not Your Average Night!

Geeks Who Drink Trivia

Do you like playing trivia games? How about after a few cold ones? Bruery Terreux is a boutique brewery that crafts specialty beers and ales, with a forte in farmhouse-style wild and sour ales, brewed and served up in a cozy environment. It is here that the Geeks Who Drink test the knowledge of individuals or teams (of up to six) who sign up for the free contest, with eight rounds of eight questions each. Honestly, who cares whether you win or lose, as long as there are good drinks?

Geeks Who Drink Trivia at Bruery Terreux, 1174 N. Grove St., Anaheim, (714) 996-6258, www.brueryterreux.com. 7 p.m. Free. —SCOTT FEINBLATT

wed/12/20

[FILM]

WE HEART RALPHIE
A Christmas Story

Based on the semi-autobiographical stories of satire writer/radio personality Jean "Shep" Shepherd Jr., who also co-scripted the film and narrated it, *A Christmas Story* transports us to a time when feuding over a leg-shaped lamp and getting your tongue stuck to a frozen pole were the worst things that could happen in life. The beauty of director Bob Clark's 1983 vision of Shepard's stories is his ability to capture the essence of the author's exquisite language without twisting it into cliché or commercialism. We know Ralphie, the Old Man, Flick, Farkus and Mrs. Parker because we are them—a bunch of clueless schmoes on an endless quest for the small joys in life, trying not to shoot our eye out in the process.

A Christmas Story at Regency South Coast Village, 1561 W. Sunflower Ave., Santa Ana, (714) 557-5701, www.regencymovies.com. 7:30 p.m. $8.50. —SR DAVIES

[CONCERT]

Surfin' Santas
Surfin'—Ultimate Christmas Concert

There's no mistaking the Beach Boys are forever synonymous with the sounds of summer. And there's a warmth and tenderness that registers whenever families get together, especially during the holidays. Surfin', a Beach Boys cover band—maybe *the* Beach Boys cover band—will sing the songs of summer (and winter) just ahead of Christmas. Featuring a slew of musicians—including a member of Brian Wilson's band—Surfin' sticks to the Beach Boys' early-'60s formula, from their choreography to their famous custom, striped shirts. They give careful consideration to every detail so they can deliver an experience that does the original band justice, continuing to dazzle fans and introducing younger generations to the surf-rock band's classic hits.

Surfin'—Ultimate Christmas Concert at Don the Beachcomber, 16278 Pacific Coast Hwy., Huntington Beach, (562) 592-1321, www.donthebeachcomber.com. 7:30 p.m. $15-$160. —DANIEL KOHN

thu/12/21

[HEALTH & FITNESS]

Bend and Stretch
Evening Kundalini Yoga and Meditation

Kundalini yoga isn't your average yoga. It was originally influenced by the Shaktism school of Hinduism that fuses breathing techniques, movement and meditation together to help the nervous and glandular systems. The best place to experience this form is at the weekly Kundalini Yoga and Meditation meetup at Dana Point's Mind Body Wellness Club. Drop in and flex those muscles and core to help overcome physical and mental stress, while diving deep into meditation with instructor Sukhmani and being serenaded by her mantra band, SUKHA. Come out and start your path to wellness.

Evening Kundalini Yoga and Meditation at Mind Body Wellness Club, 32407 Pacific Coast Hwy., Dana Point, (855) 933-4848, www.mindbodywc.com. 7 p.m. $15. —AIMEE MURILLO

[FILM]

TOO REAL
A Day Without a Mexican

Hoo, boy, do we really need to explain why this 13-year-old movie remains relevant? Latino immigrants are bigger targets than ever, the cringey "Build That Wall!" slogan is being chanted far and wide throughout this country, and immigrant detention centers are the sites of human-rights violations. Sergio Arau's prophetic film *A Day Without a Mexican* illustrates with satirical finesse the social and economical consequences if Mexicans in California really did just disappear, affecting everything from the macro to the micro level, with disastrous results. UC Irvine's Dr. Joseph Morales introduces the film and brings the message home for viewers. Go see it!

A Day Without a Mexican at Laguna Art Museum, 307 Cliff Dr., Laguna Beach, (949) 494-8971, lagunaartmuseum.org. 7 p.m. Free with museum admission ($5-$7). —AIMEE MURILLO

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1/5 COCO MONTOYA
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1/11 THE SUBDUDES
1/12 TOMMY CASTRO AND THE PAINKILLERS
1/13 DESPERADO (EAGLES TRIBUTE)
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1/24 JOHN HIATT & THE GONERS, FEATURING SONNY LANDRETH
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1/28 PAUL BARRERE & FRED TACKETT
2/2 HOWARD JONES SOLO
2/3 ENGLISH BEAT
2/9 LOS LOBOS ROCK SCHOOL
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2/11 SIDE DEAL FEAT. SKURR BAXTER
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2/15 THE VERY BEST OF DAVE MASON
2/16 THE 5TH DIMENSION
2/17 THE DAN BAND
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3/2 & 3/3 KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD
3/4 SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS
3/9 GARY PUCKETT

UPCOMING SHOWS

2/24 MARC SEAL
2/28 TINSLEY ELLIS
3/2 KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD BAND
3/3 SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS
3/4 KEIKO MATSUI
3/6 KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD
3/9 GARY PUCKETT & THE UNION GAP
3/10 WALTER TROUT
3/18 STEVE TYRELL
3/17 ST. PATRICK'S DAY WITH THE FENIANS
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3/23 BEATLES vs STONES - A MUSICAL SHOWDOWN
3/24 CARL PALMER'S ELP LEGACY
3/25 MARTIN SEXTON
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A New Spin

Whealthy applies the assembly-line concept and a novel cooking system to Mongolian barbecue

BY EDWIN GOEI

TAYLOR HAMBY

There's a running joke in the 1993 Sylvester Stallone sci-fi flick *Demolition Man* that all restaurants in its dystopian future are Taco Bells. The movie is set in 2032, just 15 years from now, and if the current state of our dystopia is any indication, all restaurants are actually going to be Chipotles. Or at least they're going to be copies of Chipotle, where you line up single-file behind a glass partition and direct a uniformed teenager in building a meal from components. Whether it's pizza, poke, Mediterranean or Asian street food, no modern fast-casual restaurant is anything these days if it doesn't give you the illusion you are in control.

To this list, we now add Mongolian barbecue, which, for the record, I never thought needed the treatment. Most old-school Mongolian barbecues are already build-your-own concepts using the now-quaint Vegas-style buffet line—and I liked going to them. Though there's never been more than a sneeze guard protecting the raw ingredients from the unwashed public, I've always relished being able to take as much as I want of whatever I want.

At the new Whealthy, raw meats and vegetables are placed safely behind the counter, protected from the proletariat. I did, however, still have a say in what vegetables I wanted and how much. As I pointed at the zucchini, carrots, mushrooms and onions, a teenaged employee layered each into a paper bowl.

As I moved on to the protein station, the employee readied a separate paper plate in anticipation of the meats I was about to choose. And there were a lot of choices—more than I've ever seen at a traditional Mongolian barbecue: cubed ham, scored squid, tofu, colorful fish balls, tiny scallops, raw shrimp, two kinds of sausage, bacon, precooked chicken and thinly sliced beef. Surveying the dizzying array, I asked, "How many meats do I get?"

"Two, but you can add another for $1 more," the employee answered.

I chose beef and scallops, but as she carefully arranged them on the plate so that each took up exactly half the space, I realized I also wanted shrimp. "You know, I'll do the $1 upgrade," I told her. "Let's add some shrimp."

She nodded, but then, rather than just adding them, she subtracted a few ounces of beef from the plate to make room. It was at that point that another employee informed me the shrimp wasn't $1, it was actually $1.50. Since there were people behind me, I didn't raise a fuss. But as my tray was moved to the next station, I quietly sulked.

From the starches—which included rice, spaghetti, udon and rice cake—I chose ramen noodles. Then, it was off to the sauces. I tasted three samples out of the seven, ranging from black soybean to tomato cream. And after opting for a combo of the herb chile and the spicy soy, I saw that the latter contained "sodium glutamate," a.k.a. MSG, with which I have no qualms but I mention here in case you do. Each sauce was applied by squirt bottle to the pile of noodles.

Next, I paid at one of those point-of-sale tablets that always try to guilt you into leaving a tip. As I found a seat in the sterile dining room, the food was brought to the novel cooking vessels that are what ultimately set Whealthy apart from a prototypical Mongolian barbecue. Admittedly, they're what made me interested in the place to begin with. Tilted at 45-degree angles like mini cannons, these cast-iron pots are cradled in a motorized contraption that heats them and rotates them around an axis as if they were cement mixers.

The theory is that when the food tumbles inside it as though socks on the spin cycle, each piece is stir-fried and seared evenly against the sides. Videos of the process at the Hollywood branch of Whealthy show fires erupting from the pots. But here, in the leafy suburbia of Ladera Ranch, there was no fire. Instead, there were wisps of steam.

When I tried the finished product, it tasted predictably like a stir-fry made in a wok that wasn't hot enough. The noodles were soggy, the beef stringy and the shrimp slightly undercooked. And despite the two sauces I chose, it was also kind of bland. But what it lacked in flavor, it made up in bulk. There was enough food to last me two more meals. And for some reason, the noodles tasted better as leftovers the next day. So I guess if this is our future, it's not so bad. Besides, have you ever had Taco Bell food the day after?

WHEALTHY
27412 Antonio Pkwy., Ste. R6, Ladera Ranch, (949) 468-8089, whealthyrestaurant.com
Open daily, 11 a.m.–8.30 p.m. Bowls, $11.50
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WHAT THE ALE
» ROBERT FLORES

Cider House Rules

TREE BRANCH CIDER HOUSE
6953 Warner Ave., Huntington Beach, (651) 215-0743, www.treebranchciderhouse.com

Making the leap from home brewer to owning and operating a full-blown brewery is no easy task, but for Brandon Simmons it was a natural progression. Simmons is a familiar face around the Orange County craft beer scene. As he drove his bus full of happy people from brewery to brewery, he would recommend the perfect brews for everyone from the discerning palate to those new to craft beer. But leaving behind his highly successful Craft Beer Tours to open Tree Branch Cider House in Huntington Beach was a dream come true.

Tree Branch Cider House offers 15 different ciders and meads alongside 15 local craft beers on tap. With Simmons' extensive knowledge of craft beer, he has curated an outstanding local tap list that includes Stereo's Wall of Sound, Barley Forge's Patsy On Nitro and Four Sons' the Great One.

The ciders are made primarily from fermented apples, while they're on the sweet side, they can still pack a punch. I tried the Pineapple Guava apple cider from Common Cider Co., it was not too sweet, slightly tangy and smooth—an overall great complex combination at 6.5 percent ABV.

For those who don't like anything sweet, try Newtopia's India Pale Cyder. With its mosaic hops, this apple cider drinks like a craft beer, though it's not as filling at 6.9 percent ABV.

While Simmons doesn't offer food more substantial than snacks such as chips, you're welcome to bring your own grub and menus are available from nearby eateries that will deliver. (The pie I tried from Two Guys Pizza was excellent.) Cheers!

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Not Home for the Holidays

Our guide to dining out on Christmas

BY CYNTHIA REBOLLEDO

Whether you're notorious for burning the bird, want to avoid the stress of hosting family or busy playing Santa, these Orange County restaurants have you covered.

COURTESY OF RUTH'S CHRIS

Ruth's Chris Steak House
Because Ruth always preferred both to either/or, the restaurant offers its signature tender, juicy, thick, seared filet alongside a perfectly broiled lobster tail. In addition to the regular menu, on Christmas Eve and Christmas, you can also feast on a double-cut pork tomahawk with apricot glaze and lobster mac and cheese. *2041 S. Harbor Blvd., Anaheim, (714) 750-5466, also at 2961 Michelson Dr., Bldg 10, Ste. A, Irvine, (949) 252-8848, www.ruthschris.com.*

Haven Gastropub
GoneStraw Farms' pasture-raised chicken, turkey sausage and Hudson Valley foie gras are combined in a roulade for the perfect bite Christmas Eve will be the final showing for this magical meal. *190 S. Glassell St., Orange, (714) 221-0680; www.havengastropub.com.*

Five Crowns and SideDoor
Enjoy dinner by the fire and classic carols sung live on Christmas Eve from 1 to 8 p.m. The holiday menu includes prime rib, beef-steak neptune, seared salmon, and prawn and lobster scampi, in addition to a traditional roasted goose served with wild grains, mushrooms, cherries and Brussels sprout leaves Five Crowns also has a traditional prime rib dinner with classic accompaniments, sides and desserts to go. *3801 E. Coast Hwy., Corona Del Mar, (949) 760-0331, www.lawrysonline.com/five-crowns and sidedooroc.com.*

TAPS Fish House and Brewery
Let TAPS take care of Christmas dinner, or join them for Christmas Eve brunch with all the trimmings. Indulge in a grand spread that includes prime rib, ham, crab legs, charcuterie and tons of desserts. *101 E. Imperial Hwy., Brea, (714) 257-0101, also at 13390 Jamboree Rd., Irvine, (714) 619-0404, www.tapsfishhouse.com.*

Michael's On Naples
Executive chef Eric Samaniego serves an elegant, four-course, prix-fixe Christmas Eve dinner from 5 to 10 p.m. Highlights include Abruzzi rye cavatelli pasta with duck confit and roasted garlic, squid ink rigatoni pasta with lobster, and Aspen ridge rib-eye cap served with roasted mushrooms and pomme puree. *5620 E. Second St., Long Beach, (562) 430-7080, michaelsonnaples.com.*

HOLE IN THE WALL

» CYNTHIA REBOLLEDO

Fire at Cairo

CAIRO RESTAURANT AND CAFE
10832 Katella Ave , Anaheim, (714) 999-8861, cairooc.com

It's a Sunday night, and Cairo's dining room is bustling with families and Disney-goers. The chef peeks her head out from behind the kitchen curtain to see diners quietly enjoying their meals as steaming-hot plates of Egyptian fare zoom out of the kitchen.

You can enjoy a menu full of favorites including hummus, grape leaves, baba ghannouj and shawarma (grilled shrimp, beef and chicken), but what you really come here for are the specialty dishes.

Start with mombar mahshy, beef intestine stuffed with rice, cardamom, parsley and mastic (the powdered, hardened resin of the mastic tree). It's fried until golden brown and served with a Mediterranean style salsa. Perfect for sharing are the Egyptian-style falafel, using ground fava beans; the discs are moist and light. The sesame seeds they're covered in add a nice crunch and nutty flavor.

Almost everyone goes for the koshari. Our former editorial assistant Yasmin Nouh (who's partially of Egyptian descent) dubbed it Egyptian lasagna, and she's right. Layers of rice, macaroni pasta and lentils are drowned in a spiced tomato sauce, then garnished with chickpeas and a heaping pile of fried onions. Mix it all together for the perfect bite.

For dessert, get the kanafah, a traditional Middle Eastern cheese pastry soaked in a sweet, sugar based syrup. This golden flaky treat (think shredded wheat) is the perfect way to end your meal. While taking our last bites, I couldn't stop thinking of the Cure song "Fire In Cairo"—because Cairo's food is straight fire!

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A Whole Meal In Each Bite

Holiday Pizza at Knott's Merry Farm

ANNE MARIE PANORINGAN

Making a next-level pizza is not a task taken lightly. Every component of the perfect slice is hotly debated. Purists will verbally bitch-slap you for thinking it should be anything besides thin crust, red sauce, mozzarella and pepperoni. Office spaces make a point of ordering a cheese or veggie version out of dietary politeness. You may be a fan of brands that offer fancy add-ons such as fresh basil and roasted garlic, promising it piping-hot in about five minutes.

Whatever your favorite is, Knott's Merry Farm invites you to push those pizza boundaries. Offered during its winter season through Jan. 7, the Holiday Pizza resembles a hot mess. However, if you're a fan of traditional Thanksgiving or Christmas dinners, you'll see the appeal of this pie. In place of tomato sauce, there's a purée of cranberry and yams. Turkey and ham are adult versions of sausage and pepperoni. Brussels sprouts, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce and, of course, gravy are added. The kitchen didn't want the crust to feel neglected, so they brushed it with a Parmesan-and-herb-infused oil. The flavors start to blend like a stick of Willy Wonka gum—minus any funky after-effects. Every bite is a meal in your mouth. Pick up a slice at Santa's Christmas Cabin and savor the fork-less wonder.

KNOTT'S MERRY FARM
8039 Beach Blvd., Buena Park, (714) 220-5200, www.knotts.com.

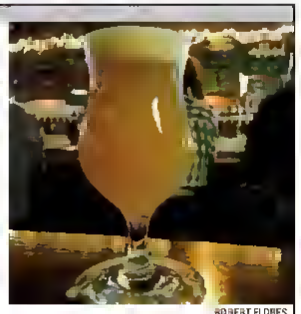
EatThisNow

» ANNE MARIE PANORINGAN

DrinkoftheWeek

» ROBERT FLORES

Dig My Earth Hazy DIPA by Brouwerij West



ROBERT FLORES

Mission Bar in downtown Santa Ana has become a local hangout for affordable craft beer, as well as a place to catch up with friends, play pool or watch a game. The bar offers 36 carefully selected craft brews on tap, a fine selection of wine, plus a few snacks, though you're welcome to bring your own grub from a nearby restaurant or taco truck. On my most recent visit, it was as if I pulled a slot machine and hit the jackpot: The beer list was outstanding! Pouring that night was Wall of Sound by Stereo Brewing in Placentia and Jacaranda Rye IPA by Claremont Craft Ales, both wonderfully balanced flagship beers. But the beer that caught my taste buds was Dig My Earth.

THE DRINK
This double hazy IPA from Brouwerij West in San Pedro is an 8 percent ABV. Brewed with Mecca Grade estate-grown barley and raw wheat, plus Amarillo, Simcoe and Centennial hops, the beer is hoppy, smooth and delicious AF! Cheers!

MISSION BAR
302 N. Main St., Santa Ana, (657) 266-0699, www.missionbarsa.com

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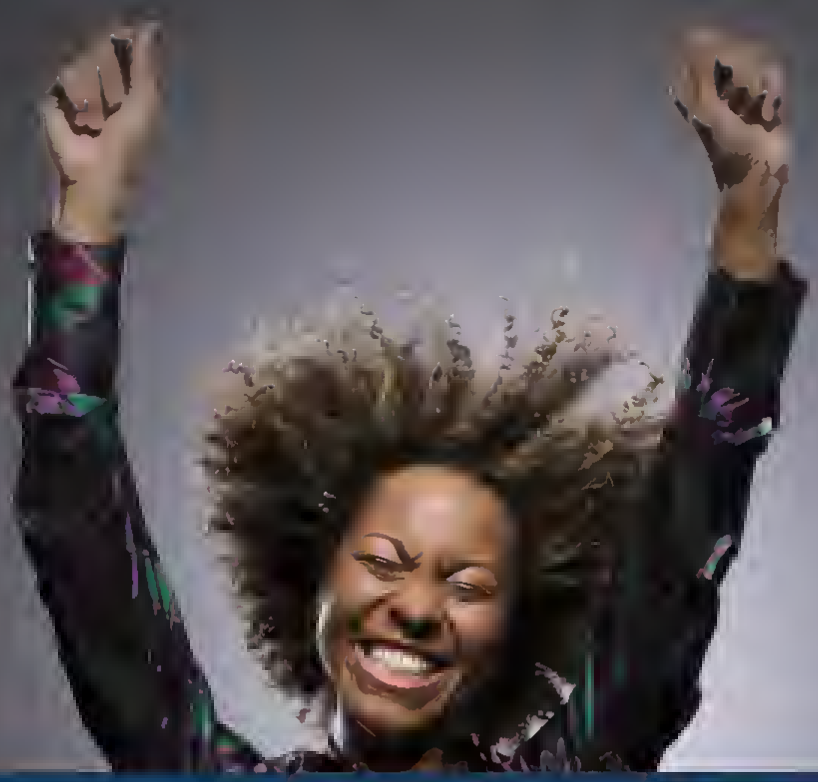

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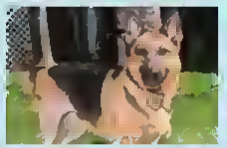
Tradar Joa, aka TJ
Age 6 years, Male



Ranata
Age 4-5 years, Female

Luna
Age 3 years, Female

Irena
Age 2 years, Female

Gladiator
Age 4 years, Male

WARNER BROS

Win the War on Christmas Specials!

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer is your ultimate MAGA gift from Jesus!

BY DEPLORABLE STACY

Christmas was made for JESUS! FOX News knows it. Evangelicals know it. Politicians who like to park behind closed restaurants and play Santa with TEENAGE GIRLS on their laps know it!

Attacks on Christmas make Jesus mad, but NASTY atheist abortionists just keep encrypting their gay agenda onto Starbucks "holiday" cups, and Jew-people keep trying to trick us into watching *Fiddler On the Roof—as if that's even a thing*. THEN there's the Hollywood Elite molesters always trying to roofie some culturally sensitive ANTI-JESUS blasphemation of *CHRISTmas* down our throats. Thank goodness TRUE believers never swallow!

Fortunately, there's still wholesome Christmas fare out there that won't turn your kids into *transgenders*, and here's a completely blessed and anointed breakdown of the Christian-family-friendly, KILLARY-hating kiddie classic *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*—because flaunting that you're "different" just means you hate THE LORD!

History The first Animagic special by producers Jules Bass and Arthur Rankin Jr premiered in 1964 and pops A LOT of boners among 4Channers, MRAs and real PATRIOTS—all of whom praise its *masculinist* depiction of flying father Donner as *sole* breadwinner and *head of household*. ALSO, Donner's wife doesn't even have a first name and is known only as "Mrs. Donner" because that's what the BIBLE says, so FUCK YOU, Bechdel—go make me a bark-and-grass sandwich!

Christian Values When baby Rudolph's nose goes off like a police siren at a BLM, WHITE-GENOCIDE rally, Islam-loving, JESUS-HATING Mrs. Donner thinks they should "just overlook it" and *accept* Rudolph for who he is. Donner isn't having any of that SJW bullshit, of course, and does what all good Christian fathers do: SHAME the child into hiding his abomination!

Tempted By Satan Rudolph tries to be just one of the "locker-room-talking boys" by poking them with his stubby horns, but that's all shot to hell when Clarice the *whore* shows up with her long, skanky, WANTON eyelashes and FORCES Rudolph to think impure thoughts. This is yet another example of why all *females* should be hidden in caves and banished from the male gaze. Besides, it's not as if THEY need to practice reindeer games—no *girls* get to be on Santa's team because HELLO, *lesbians*!

Republican Values Even though Rudolph is led further astray by a faggy elf named Hermey (who quit his solid blue-collar job over IDENTITY POLITICS and plans to start some Bernie Sanders SOCIALIZED MEDICINE dentist shit in the North Pole), the two CUCKS fortunately run into a TRUE capitalist: Yukon Cornelius! A pistol-packing, self-made man hunting for silver and gold and a high return on his market share, Yukon mushes his team of dutiful hounds (that have NOT been neutered) through perilous blizzards and rules them with an iron whip because *man hath dominion over every creeping thing that creepeth on the Earth*. Just ask KATHIE LEE GIFFORD!

Stupid-Ass Snowflakes There's a crap-ton of snow in this show, but the SNOWFLAKES we're talking about are those broken bullshit toys on MISFIT ISLAND. No, no one wants a choo choo with square fucking wheels. Where were you made, NORTH KOREA? And what kind of PC dumbass puts jelly into a water pistol? That thing's for BULLETS, and I have an adapter kit! All of these gay LOSERS are angling for some "SPECIAL INTEREST" privileges that have been RIGHTLY denied by Santa, and their *King*—a lame-ass, do-gooding Barack Hussein Ohummer-wannabe lion—flies around scooping up shit toys and treating them like *actual cool toys*. Time to NUKE this GLOBALIST Gomorrah, STAT!

Revelations When Rudolph finally grows a pair (of antlers) and returns home, he finds that his America-hating SOCIALISM led to his parents and slutty Clarice getting captured by the INDIGENOUS ACTIVIST Abominable Snow Monster. But, after flamin' Hermey pulls some GUANTANAMO-style tooth-torture on the hairy heathen, all the dickweeds become heroes. At this point, the story goes full LIBTARD PROPAGANDA as COMMIE Hermey is allowed to live among *normal* people, the monster is *handed* a job that should have gone to my really tall white cousin *Ron*, and even *Donner* pusses out and apologizes to his TREE-HUGGER son!

HOWEVER . . . even though Santa is kicking Jesus in the BALLS with all of this TAKE A KNEE crap, he redeems himself when, like a TRUE CAPITALIST, he realizes that he can save his business by taking advantage of Rudolph's retardedness and hires him to lead the team through the blizzard—and THAT is some epic TRUMPNATION COVFEFE, my friends! AH-MEN!

The Rub In the *original* ending, Santa never goes back for those ILLEGAL ALIEN Misfit Toys, but a hoard of whiney-ass BETA kids cried a river of liberal tears over it and started a letter-writing campaign the next year, so, the PUSSY filmmakers caved and added a *new* ending in which Santa drops the shit toys down kids' chimneys after all—totally polluting the toy gene pool and DEFINITELY causing NAFTA. MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERY SINGLE FUCKING DAY FOREVER, BITCHES!

LETTERS@OCWEEKLY.COM

For the Bonnie Tribe!

BY MATT COKER

How the Grinch Stole Christmas. A green meanie exacts revenge from the outskirts of Whoville by ruining Christmas for the townsfolk. Bring sweaters and blankets for this showing under the stars. *Lake Forest Sports Park, 28000 Rancho Pkwy., Lake Forest; ca-lakeforest.civicplus.com. Fri., 6 p.m. Free.*

It's a Wonderful Life. Frank Capra's 1946 holiday classic. *Lido Theater, 3459 Via Lido, Newport Beach, (949) 673-8350. Fri., 7 p.m. $9-$11.50; also at Regency Directors Cut Cinema at Rancho Niguel, 25471 Rancho Niguel Rd., Laguna Niguel, (949) 831-0446. Tues., 7:30 p.m. $8.*

The Room. This sensual indie thriller—written, directed, produced by and starring Tommy Wiseau—is one that some (well, me) find unwatchable. *The Frida Cinema, 305 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana, thefridacinema.org. Fri., 11 p.m. $7-$10.*

Doob (No Bed of Roses). The Bangladeshi/India co-production is a drama written and directed by Mostofa Sarwar Farooki about what happens to two families when the patriarch of one dies. *Starlight Cinema City, 5635 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim. (714) 970-6700; starlightcinemas.com. Sat., 2 p.m. $15.*

Jesus Christ Superstar. You can not only watch the 1973 cinematic version of the Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice rock opera, but you can also meet Jesus himself. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Sat., 2 & 8 p.m.; Sun., 2 p.m. $7-$10.*

Die Hard. John McClane tries to stop a terrorist plot to take everyone hostage at the company party of McClane's ex-wife in a downtown Los Angeles high-rise. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Sat., 5:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

The Living Sea and Coral Reef Adventure. Meryl Streep narrates a 40-minute survey of the world's oceans that emphasizes it's a single interconnected being that all life depends on. Then comes the 45-minute *Coral Reef Adventure*, during which narrator Liam Neeson takes viewers on a once-in-a-lifetime journey across the South Pacific. *Park Plaza, 200 block of Park Ave., Laguna Beach, (949) 497-3311. Sat., 6 p.m. Free.*

Jingle Bell Rocks! Mitchell Kezin hits the road to find what is behind such songs as "Green ChriStmaS," "Santa Claus Was a Black Man" and "Merry Christmas Someone." *Art Theatre, 2025 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 438-5435. Sun., 11 a.m. $8.50-$11.50.*

Shackleton's Antarctic Adventure. It's a documentary on explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton's now-legendary 1914-1916 British Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition. *Bowers Museum of Cultural Art, Kershaw Auditorium, 2002 N. Main St., Santa Ana, (714) 567-3600. Sun., 11 a.m. & 1 p.m. $12-$15; Bowers members and children 12 and younger, free.*

The Nutcracker. Bolshoi Ballet presents the holiday stage classic set to Tchaikovsky's music and simulcast in theaters nationwide. *Regency Directors Cut Cinema at Rancho Niguel, (949) 831-0446. Sun., noon; Tues., 7:30 p.m. $13-$16; also at Regency South Coast Village, 1561 Sunflower Ave., Santa Ana, (714) 557-5701. Sun., 12:55 p.m.; Tues., 7 p.m. $14-$17; and various theaters, www.fathomevents.com. Sun., 12:55 p.m. $18.*

Toy Story That Time Forgot. The 2014 animated short in which Woody, Buzz Lightyear and the other toys must go up against dinosaur toys. After the show, sit with Santa for a photo. Grab a spot early; bring friends, family, chairs and blankets, but know going in that outside food and drinks are not permitted. You can buy them all around you. *Pacific City, 21010 Pacific Coast Hwy., Huntington Beach, www.gopacificcity.com/events/. Sun., crafts, 1 p.m. Free (but RSVP required); movie, 3 p.m. Free.*

Gremlins. Zach Galligan inadvertently breaks three important rules concerning his new pet, unleashing a horde of malevolently mischievous monsters on a small town. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Mon.-Tues., 7:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

Arthur Christmas. In this animated comedy from 2011, Santa's son Arthur is on a crazy mission to deliver the last present. Will he make it? This After School Club screening is aimed at children in kindergarten through sixth grade. *Fullerton Main Library, 353 W. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton. (714) 738-6327. Tues., 4 p.m. Free. No registration is required.*

The Meshuga Nutcracker! It's a full-length musical comedy that features the silly sensibilities of the folklore of Chelm (a fictional town of fools) underscored by an invigorating klezmer-ized orchestration of Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker Suite," including original lyrics that celebrate Hanukkah. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Tues., 7 p.m. $15.*

The Princess Diaries. For this Teen Book to Movie Club screening, participants are to have read Meg Cabot's *The Princess Diaries* before seeing Garry Marshall's 2001 family rom-com. *Fullerton Main Library, (714) 738-6327. Wed., 4 p.m. Free.*

The Polar Express. A young boy embarks on a magical adventure to the North Pole. Grab a spot early; bring friends, family, chairs and blankets, but know going in that outside food and drinks are not permitted. You can get them at surrounding stands and restaurants. *Pacific City, Level 2 (near Saint Marc and Smocking Birds), www.gopacificcity.com/events/. Wed., 6 p.m. Free.*

DISNEY PIXAR

A Christmas Story. Bob Clark's near-perfect 1983 holiday classic. *Regency South Coast Village, (714) 557-5701. Wed., 7:30 p.m. $9.*

Eyes Wide Shut. Stanley Kubrick died six days after the first test screening of his final film, which proved to be just as polarizing as most of the master's other pictures. *The Frida Cinema; thefridacinema.org. Wed.-Thurs., Dec. 20-21, 7:30 p.m., also Dec. 24, 2 p.m. $7-$10.*

Gran Torino. Disgruntled Korean War veteran Walt Kowalski tries to reform a Hmong teen neighbor who tried to steal the old man's prized 1972 Gran Torino. *Fullerton Main Library, (714) 738-6327. Thurs., Dec. 21, 1 p.m. Free.*

Cars 3. Lightning McQueen is out to prove to brash new racers that he's still the world's best. *Fullerton Main Library, (714) 738-6327. Thurs., Dec. 21, 6:30 p.m. Free.*

Black Clover. In a world where magic is everything, Yuno and Asta are found abandoned at a church on the same day. At age 15, both receive magic books, and Asta's newfound anti-magic powers allow him to negate Yuno's spells as both seek to become the Wizard King. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., Dec. 21, 8 p.m., also Dec. 23, 1:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

Tricky History

Unlike our national political climate, Yorba Linda's Nixon Library gets better and better

BY DAVE BARTON

The last time I visited the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum was in 1990, protesting its opening. I was 30 and pissed about the state of the world. Orange County was overwhelmingly Republican—so much so it was celebrating Yorba Linda's most successful, and humiliated, son by dedicating a new building to him. Twenty-seven years later, Orange County Republicans are ahead of Democrats in registration by only 5 percent. I'm older and smarter—and so is the Library. Its previous skirting around Watergate, abuse of power and Nixon's racism is now a thing of the past. Taken as a whole, there's still some manipulative sleight-of-hand in the way the permanent exhibits end, but my cynical feelings were modified by the more even-handed approach that's now taken.

A docent told me the Library had been redesigned to bring "the past and the present together." With the current presidential administration lying about everything under the sun, members of its legal team saying things such as "[The] President cannot obstruct justice because he is the chief law-enforcement officer," and the constant chatter that He Who Must Not Be Named is considering firing Special Prosecutor Robert Mueller, little did she know just how much that was true.

The 14-minute film you watch before you enter the galleries is surprisingly fair, even balanced, despite its stirringly heroic music and talking heads chatting intimate superlatives about the former president. When they showed footage of Nixon saying, "I am not a quitter," it instantly transported me back to my childhood, when I watched him resign, awash in tears. (It wasn't until two years later, when the 1976 movie *All the President's Men* came out, and I read Woodward and Bernstein's books, that I realized how ridiculous those pubescent tears were.)

I had assumed the interactive exhibits would be dry, even boring, but you're surrounded by films and images from the beginning of the '60s: the Cuban Missile Crisis, Vietnam, the rise of feminism (with Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* getting a positive mention), and Chicago police beating the hell out of protesters at the Democratic National Convention. Setting the mood very quickly, the exhibit (which takes about two hours to go through) follows a fairly linear and predictable path, starting with the moment Nixon ran for and lost the governorship of California.

What follows is a remarkable list of Nixon's accomplishments: his support of affirmative action and desegregation of Southern schools; the sending of a man to the moon; his backing of the Equal Rights Amendment and the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency; the end of the war in Vietnam; the peace talks in the Middle East; his affirmation of the first female nominee for the Supreme Court; the opening up of communication and trade with China; détente with the Soviet Union. (The last two are vitally important because Nixon started his career as an anti-Communist party hack, working with such disreputable stooges as Joseph McCarthy and Roy Cohn.) I'm not suggesting you ignore the bombing of Cambodia, the overthrow of Allende, the war on drugs that targeted liberal protesters and blacks, his enemies list, or "The Gap" in the tapes, all of which are at least now mentioned. What I found most disconcerting about Nixon's accomplishments was how expansive in scope they were, as well as how small, restrictive and backwards-thinking the country's current foreign policies are.

The most surprising turnabout here is the frank information about Watergate, Nixon's enemies list and his abuses of power. While this plays into the romantic idea that Nixon was a tragically Shakespearean actor complicit in his downfall, it also provides facts and a context that urges viewers to acknowledge both the positive and the negative. Where it undercuts itself is the ending: the Library puts on things, interrupting the story's linear path toward resignation with flashbacks to the idyll of Nixon's childhood and young adulthood. The result is that instead of following Nixon's crimes to the logical next steps of punishment, retreat and isolation, it monkey-wrenches that sequence of events with a dose of sop by pivoting to his marriage with Pat Nixon. Love and death, not Watergate and impeachment, are the thoughts in your head as you walk through the peaceful gardens surrounding the Library to the couple's graves, their black tombstones side by side, separated from visitors by a tiny hedgerow.

The last things you see on your visit is Nixon's childhood home—a small, comfortable white house in which he lived for nine years—and the restored 6-ton Sikorsky Army One helicopter that flew the former president to San Clemente following his resignation. The house was closed to visitors the day I was there, and I didn't want to wait in the sun for a tour of the chopper, but it succeeded in bringing up one final memory: Nixon standing on the helicopter steps, arm crooked over his forehead and hiding his eyes, waving goodbye to the nation he not only loved, but also lied to.

DAVE BARTON

RICHARD NIXON PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

18001 Yorba Linda Blvd., Yorba Linda, (714) 993-5075, www.nixonlibrary.gov. Open Mon.-Sat., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m.-5 p.m. $16-$26 until Jan. 7, 2018, after that, $6-$16.

TrendZilla

» AIMEE MURILLO

See You, Space Artist!

The art of Erwin Papa is like something you'd see in an '80s sci-fi comic book that your older brother owned and you sneaked a peek at when he wasn't home. It has an old-school feel to it, with crisp black-and-white ink illustrations and characters that are monstrous, toothy warriors from outer space, leather-jacket-wearing punks, strict, *Terminator*-like automatons; and young woman in elaborate, spiked armor—like *Mad Max* in space.

As with any illustrator, Papa grew up on a heavy diet of sci-fi, fantasy and horror media, with his biggest comic art influences being Moebius, Katsuhiro Otomo, Jack Kirby, Simon Bisley and Katsuya Terada. The Lakewood-born, Long Beach–based artist incorporates them all into his vision of otherworldly soldiers inhabiting a post-apocalyptic wasteland.

A surprising element of inspiration in Papa's work is abstract sculpture, which informs the way he designs his characters. In abstract sculpture, random objects are placed together to create a brand-new form; likewise, in Papa's drawings, his different influences are put together to create something new. While Papa hasn't created a storyline to go with his characters, there's a lot of visual information found in each figure's armor and battle gear because of the insane amount of detail.

Most of Papa's illustrations are available in zines, his "Bad Days" zines feature figures in panels with empty speech bubbles so that readers can add their own dialogue. "When I'm doing an illustration, I'm already leaving it to the audience to figure out who this person is—like, 'Who's this girl in the helmet?' I don't have a story to it," Papa says. "Here, they can make up their own story."

While he continues making sculptures and new characters for more zines, you can nab Papa's work through his online store (erwinpapa.storenvy.com) or check him out on Instagram (@erwin.papa). Hey, DC and Marvel: Give this guy a job already!

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Y'all Better Reckon-ize

The inaugural California Country Awards unites a sprawling local scene

BY NATE JACKSON

HONEY COUNTY HONEYS

SAMANTHA KLOSE

Common theory holds that award ceremonies are no longer a relevant way to measure the greatness of an artist. Such has definitely been the case for the Grammys, which only recently decided to acknowledge the power of genres such as hip-hop and dance music, which have been going strong for decades. But when it comes to showcasing a local scene such as SoCal country, it's about more than just album sales, star power or major-label promotion.

"Lately, I've felt the pulse of Southern California country music get stronger and stronger, and there've been so many more festivals and venues doing country night and an influx of bands," says OC-based country singer Daniel Bonte, organizer of Saturday's inaugural California Country Awards. "The one thing that's really shined through is the country family keeps growing and growing."

Bringing together multiple tribes of country musicians from San Diego to Bakersfield, Bonte's grassroots attempt at an awards showcase and ceremony honors those who've worked hard in their fields with minimal accolades despite the quality of their music that often changes drastically from city to city.

While OC is known for its mix of modern/pop country and Americana, scenes in LA, San Diego and Bakersfield have their own pedigrees when it comes to sun-dried outlaw grit that conjures the ghosts of Waylon Jennings and Merle Haggard. The need to bridge the gap and strengthen relationships among artists is the main motive behind what Bonte's creating. Over the past two years, he has cultivated OC's country scene through regular live-music nights at Big's Bar in Fullerton and the Wayfarer in Costa Mesa. "I realized that now there are enough bands to do an awards show. Two years ago? No," he says. "But now there's enough bands who are contributing to the scene that are working together that we can do something where we can recognize the hard work and the sweat going into it."

It's bittersweet that he should finally get a chance to make this show happen in the wake of the horrific Las Vegas massacre at the Route 91 Harvest Festival that took the lives of 58 people and injured 489. Bonte attended the festival with a group of friends and wound up trapped in the middle of the chaos, doing what he could to save lives. After Sonny Melton, of Tennessee, was shot while shielding his wife from the gunman's hail of bullets, Bonte performed CPR and dragged his body to a truck that took him to the hospital. He stayed with Melton's wife after her husband was pronounced dead. Melton's death made national headlines, and Bonte not only attended, but also sang at the celebration of Melton's life, the experience inspired him to strengthen his own community.

"It was a very humble moment for me when I got to go to his [Sonny's] funeral in Tenoessee," Bonte says. "Even though it was extremely tragic and one of those things I'll just never ever forget, being in that gymnasium with an entire town celebrating someone's life and, as crazy and as much hate as there was in the moment that took his life, that moment during his memorial just overshadowed everything."

That amount of love surging through the country community seemed to extend to California Country Awards' freshman voting session. Bonte and his team received more than 1,100 nomination ballots from local fans for various categories such as Best Video, Best Venue, Best Musician and Best Song. The list of nominees included locals Alice Wallace, Stephen Wesley, the Morgan Leigh Band, Redwood Black, Gethen Jenkins and Honey County, who are also one of the event's headlining performers.

For Dani Rose, Honey County's lead singer, garnering nominations in three categories—Best Band, Song and Video—is an amazing way to wrap up a whirlwind year. The LA-based trio gained a stunning amount of attention from Nashville despite their desire to stay firmly rooted in California. "We were so honored and grateful to be included in a lineup with our peers and friends because you never know how the community views you," Rose says. "As an artist, you work so hard to prove your worth, and to have some recognition of that within our own community is really rewarding."

As with any new event, especially one that claims country as its audience, it will take time to build. And though the Gaslamp in Long Beach might not be as big as Madison Square Garden, where the Grammy Awards are held, the intentions behind the awards resonate with this market of country music that has managed to succeed far away from the powerhouse Nashville scene.

For an outlaw country artist such as Long Beach's Jenkins, the idea that our local country scene is finally starting to communicate and acknowledge one another far outweighs the value of any statue. "Whether you're playing pop, country, folk, or rock & roll, if you're playing original music, you know the struggle we all go through trying to get people to come to our shows and pay our musicians," Jenkins says. "We [should] focus on the things we have in common. We like to make music that makes people move and feel happy and we can all relate to."

A consortium of respected names from country radio and the SoCal music scene were tapped to be judges for the awards program. Unlike genres that rely less and less on radio every year, Bonte says, country fans remain very loyal to the airwaves and personalities such as Graham and Dave (from the morning show on Go Country 105 FM), Heather Froglear and Pepper (from K-Frog 95.1 and 92.9 FM), OC promoter and president of Sweet Relief Musicians Fund Bill Bennett, and *Weekly* writer Heidi Darby are among those on the panel.

Whether or not the first show is a huge success, Jenkins and other artists in the genre believe Bonte and the California Country Awards are coming from a good place. For proof, look no further than the fact that Bonte—who's had a pretty impressive year himself with the release of new videos, music and national touring—refused to nominate his own band. But he plans to hand it off to a new coordinator once they solidify all the bylaws to make it legit. Then, he says, all bets are off.

"Just being the architect of it, I really like that aspect," Bonte says. "So I made myself not eligible this year, but next year, I'm gonna wipe the floor … I'm coming in hot."

NJACKSON@OCWEEKLY.COM

THE 2017 CALIFORNIA COUNTRY AWARDS

at the Gaslamp Music + Bar + Kitchen, 6251 Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach, (562) 596-4718; www.thegaslamprestaurant.com. Sat., 4-6:30 p.m. $20-$55. All ages.

NICK NUK'EM

$pecial Delivery

Tony $antana's new content series hopes to unlatch the door to the hip-hop industry

BY NICK NUK'EM

"If somebody handed me a Sprite bottle for some money, I'm 'bout to open two of them muthafuckas," Tony $antana slushes in between sips of a raspberry sour at Anaheim's Packing House.

The 22-year-old encourages the often-jettisoned tactics of today's flyest rappers, who build their brands and portfolios quicker than they add to their catalog. $antana approaches today's hip-hop scene in full grasp of the realities that sneak past the quality of music and onto screens around the web. Somewhat jaded by what rap has become, $antana is eager to trade thoughts about music and its ancillaries two cents at a time.

"I don't get how people move to LA, and all of a sudden, they're in the industry," he says, unabashedly stumped by others' ability to break big in an oversaturated industry of poseurs and gatekeepers. He applauds fellow OC native Yung Pinch on his move out of the county and into streaming queues around the world, but he finds himself "baffled" at the possibility of any person manifesting their wildest desires.

The young MC's passion has kept him on the outside the past six years, always recalibrating his strategy, like trying to solve a Rubik's cube. But the latest approach for the son of Syrian immigrants is a series of monthly releases that sync with the practices of rap's most successful acts in 2017: press content and push it as quick as fans grow bored with previous releases. This concerted effort, called the "$antana Series," finds him doing more of the grunt work, including sending out press releases and ensuring his material can be found on all platforms and streaming services.

The first track, "Temptations," widens the scope on $antana's Jay-Z- and Nas-influenced angles. "This is about how people are so tempted to do things for money, do things for women," he says. "It's about realizing that at the end of the day, that shit don't really matter.

"When you 90 and you on your deathbed, you're not going to think about the money you made or the pussy you got," he continues. "You're going to think about the relationships you built."

It's a thesis he arrived at only after experience, $antana explains as he checks off the set of non-negotiables he needs in his music. "It's real. It's lyrical. It bumps. It's melodic."

$antana approaches the track in a bludgeoning vocal style comparable to Bad Boy's Shyne and employs East Coast wordplay. He also references Jay-Z's 1996 track "D'evils."

Overall, the song plays out like a reminder for him to stay true to himself as an aspiring figure in an industry where moral compromises and uncharacteristic behavior make up swaths of interactions. "It's a lot of dilemmas and choices," $antana says. "It's just losing sight of who you are."

That's one of the several lessons $antana hopes listeners unearth in his tracks. "It's about spreading something that can affect everybody," he says of his musical philosophy.

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ANGELICA MONROY

The Perfect Storm

THE HURRICANES
play at the Continental Room, 115 W Santa Fe Ave., Fullerton, (714) 526-4529; continentalroomoc.com. Sun., 9 p.m. Free 21+

When the Hurricanes step onstage and pick up their instruments, they live up to their name as one manic audience after another bay ing crowd has been blown away.

The band was formed in 2012 when drummer Alex "Little Man" Marcial then a high school senior in Santa Ana, persuaded his recently graduated buddies Roach Sanchez (vocals, guitar) and Gibram "Walter" Chavez (bass, har monica) to join him for a stab at a school Battle of the Bands contest. "Coming out of Santa Ana, people will assume Latino kids won't succeed or don't do anything for themselves," says Sanchez. "[Marcial] asked us to jam out with him because he wanted to prove to his teachers that he could do more than what they expected of him."

After their 15-minute set, someone asked what their name was. "Gibram just said 'The Hur ricanes' on the spot," Sanchez remembers.

The band have always had deep love for and knowledge of obscure garage rock, surf and R&B—which, according to Sanchez comes from their parents. "That's the music they grew up with, and the Mexican version of it—they introduced us to that music," he says. "We heard that music with their cassettes and records, but with the internet, we were able to trace where it really started. Mexico got 50s music in the '60s."

That blend of influences, combined with their own Latin roots, makes for an intoxicating experience. Though they set out with the inten tion of simply rocking out, their influences shine through: tamborazo music intensifies the rhythm section, cumbia pushes the riffs, and Sanchez tends to sustain notes thanks to mariachi sing ers. Smashed together, the results are majestic.

Of course, there have been hiccups along the way, such as during an early gig at the Obser vatory when Sanchez partied a little too hard. "People were buying us drinks left and right, and then the manager bought us a bottle of whisky," Sanchez says. "I got a call asking where the fuck I was because it was time to go on. I said I was ready, and it was a sold-out, packed show." As he bent down to grab his guitar, all the alcohol in his system hit him at once, he recalls. The first song started, and everybody was on tempo except Sanchez, who told the crowd, 'I just wanna apologize, but I'm fucking wasted.'" After playing one song, the band left the stage, thinking it was the worst show ever. "I never got wasted onstage again," Sanchez says.

Sanchez learned his lesson, and the Hur ricanes have blossomed into one of the more exciting rock & roll bands on the circuit, sharing stages with artists as prestigious as Wande Jackson, Ronnie Spector and the Reverend Horton Heat. The band also scored a deal with LA-based Wild Records, which led to a couple of releases, including the excellent 7-inch single "But You Let Me Go." The Hurricanes are now working with Dirty Water Records on an album to be released next year.

America and, indeed, the world need these Hurricanes kicking shit up in every small town and city dive bar and theater. There's really noth ing stopping them.

LocalsOnly
» BRETT CALLWOOD

Hey, Orange County/Long Beach musicians & bands! Mail your music, contact info, high-res photos & impending show dates for possible review to: Locals Only, *OC Weekly*, 18475 Sandiler Circle, Fountain Valley, CA 92708. Or email your link to: localsonly@ocweekly.com.

Neurodiverse

As a 36-year-old straight woman with autism, I am often misidentified as lesbian because my social signaling must read so masculine. I am not bothered by this. However, it is annoying when someone who should know better thinks I would hide it if I were LGBTQ. I'm very direct and honest—sometimes to my detriment—and the idea that I would hide something so fundamental about myself is abhorrent to me. I don't consider myself disabled; I am different than most people, but not broken. But as a person with a diagnosed "disability" that includes an inability to accurately read and display social cues, I know that a person's perception of your sexual orientation is definitely affected by social signaling. I enjoy your podcast, and I feel like I am educating myself about how neurotypical people think. But I wish there was as good a source of advice for people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). I have been searching for a lot of the advice for people with ASD is written by people who are not on the spectrum and focuses on passing for neurotypical.

Not Disabled, Not Lesbian, Not Typical

I shared your letter with Steve Silberman, the award-winning author of the *New York Times* best-seller *NeuroTribes: The Legacy of Autism and the Future of Neurodiversity*. NDNLNT. I really have nothing to add to his response—your question is outside my supposed areas of quasi-expertise—so I'm going to let Steve take it from here.

"I'm not surprised to hear that NDNLNT is more annoyed by people thinking she's in the closet than by them misidentifying her as gay," he says. "In my experience, a passionate concern for social justice—and compassion for other stigmatized and marginalized people—is so common among folks on the spectrum that it's practically diagnostic. Furthermore, there seems to be an interesting overlap between being autistic and having a nonstandard gender identity—whether you define yourself as gay, bi, trans, straight but not cis, or nonbinary.

"My autistic friends share NDNLNT's concern about the lack of good resources for autistic people who want to learn more about the nuances of sex, dating and gender identity. As she points out, many of the advice books written specifically for people on the spectrum take the approach that the route to success in this arena involves acting as much like a neurotypical as possible, which just adds stress to an already-stressful situation. They also tend to be tediously heteronormative and dreadfully vanilla-centric.

"But there are exceptions. My autistic friends recommend *Life and Love: Positive Strategies for Autistic Adults* by Zosia Zaks, *The Aspie Girl's Guide to Being Safe With Men* by Debi Brown, and the anthology *What Every Autistic Girl Wishes Her Parents Knew* edited by Emily Paige Ballou, Kristine Thomas and Sharon daVanport. While not autism-specific, *The Ultimate Guide to Sex and Disability* also comes highly recommended. My favorite autism blog, Thinking Person's Guide to Autism, runs frank and fascinating pieces such as 'Autism and Orgasm.' Another place to look for useful advice is in presentations by autistic self-advocates such as Lindsey Nebeker, Stephen Mark Shore and Amy Gravino (whose TEDx talk 'Why Autism Is Sexier Than You Think It Is' is on YouTube)."

Dan here: Thank you so much, Steve. And to everyone else: There's more about Steve and his work at his website (stevesilberman.com), and I strongly recommend following him on Twitter (@stevesilberman) where he daily battles Republicanism, ignorance and hatred. (I'm sorry, was that redundant?)

My fiancé and I are getting straight-married this summer. My fiancé's best man is in a polyamorous relationship—which is not the problem. The issue is that we like only one of his boyfriends. Our best man moved in with the boyfriend we like two years ago. The other boyfriend is new (six months), younger and immature. Whenever we've seen the three of them, his new boyfriend was fighting with one of them. I don't want our best man to feel like we are being rude in excluding his new partner, but I don't want there to be drama for our best man at our wedding.

Being Rude Isn't Dat Easy

Hmm. A new addition to a poly relationship who creates drama and makes close friends of the ongoing pair uncomfortable? I'd put the odds of their third being in the picture six months from now at zero. So this is a problem that will most likely solve itself. But you could always ask your friend what he would like you to do. You're not worried about the new boyfriend ruining your wedding, BRIDE, you're worried about him ruining the day for your best man. So ask your best man what would be worse: the new boyfriend being excluded (and your best man incurring his wrath at home), or the new boyfriend being included (and your best man having to put up with his bullshit at the wedding)? Then +1 or +2 accordingly.

I'm an attractive 36-year-old woman. Recently, I was stuck in a packed subway car. I squeezed in next to the best-looking straphanger I could find, faced him as if we were slow-dancing, pressed my tits into him and straddled his leg. We were so close my head was near his shoulder—I could feel an electrical charge running through his body—and we stayed that way until I got to my stop. Upon parting, I whispered, "You're very attractive." And he whispered back, "So are you." I've pulled this on crowded trains a few other times. They're my favorite erotic memories, and it sure seemed as if the guys enjoyed these experiences. But Charlie Rose thought he was "exploring shared feelings." So I wanted to ask: Am I a groper?

Tiresome Reality Arrogates Intimate Nearness

Yup.

Some people would say the obvious response—the obvious way to open your eyes to what's so wrong about your actions—would be to ask, "If a dude did this to a woman on a public conveyance, would *that* be okay?" But a woman seeking out the hottest guy on the subway *and* pressing her tits into his chest *and* straddling his leg exists in an entirely different context than a man doing the same to a woman. As I wrote recently on my blog in the Savage Love Letter of the Day, "Men don't move through their lives deflecting near-constant unwanted sexual attention, we aren't subjected to epidemic levels of sexual violence, and consequently, we don't live with the daily fear that we could be the victims of sexual violence at any time and in any place." So a man on the receiving end of your behavior—even a man who felt annoyed, offended or threatened—is going to experience your actions very differently than a woman subjected to the same actions by a man. A man is unlikely to feel threatened; a woman is unlikely to feel anything else.

While the man you've done this to seemed to enjoy it—and we only have your word to go on—that doesn't make your subway perving okay. There are definitely men out there, TRAIN, who would be upset and/or angered by your actions. Me, for instance—and not (just) because I'm gay. (I don't like being hugged by strangers. I would hate being humped by a random perv on the train.) There are also men out there who have been the victims of sexual violence—far, far fewer men than women, of course, but you can't tell by looking at a guy whether he'd be traumatized by your opportunistic attentions. Even if your hump-dar (like gaydar but for bumping) was perfect and you never did this to a man who didn't enjoy it, you're normalizing sexual assault on subways and buses, TRAIN, thereby making these spaces less safe for women than they already are. Knock it the fuck off.

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Toke of the Week

» MARY CARREON

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COURTESY OF HENRY'S ORIGINAL

Aside from the company name, one of the first things you see when scoping out a pack of Henry's Original prerolls is the phrase "Heirloom Cannabis." I mean, we all know what family heirlooms are and about heirloom tomatoes. But what is heirloom cannabis?

According to *Merriam Webster's Dictionary*, the word *heirloom* "[denotes] a traditional variety of plant or breed of animal that is not associated with large-scale commercial agriculture." Man-nating on that definition, I realized how vital it is to the cannabis industry to have brands such as Henry's Original. Within five years, I'm predicting corporate monsters such as Monsanto, Bayer, Marlboro and Pfizer will jump into the industry causing major shifts to the marketplace—and not likely good ones.

Using sustainable farming methods, Henry's Original produces noticeably clean flowers. And once you get used to smoking the company's prerolls, it's easy to tell when other brands aren't clean. It's alarming how contaminated most cannabis is—even when it's labeled as medicinal.

Every Henry's box comes with three prerolls, which came in handy when I woke up with a wicked post-Thanksgiving hangover. Ritual, a 25:1 CBD strain, was wrapped inside white hemp paper. After puffing five or six hits, my headache melted away, and I was able to stomach eating food, which is shocking considering I ate enough for five the day before. Henry's Original CBD joints saved the day from being insufferable!

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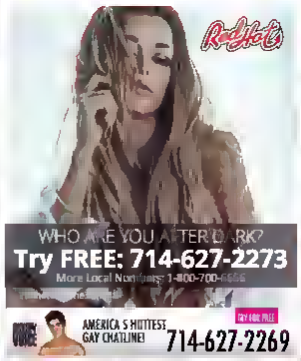
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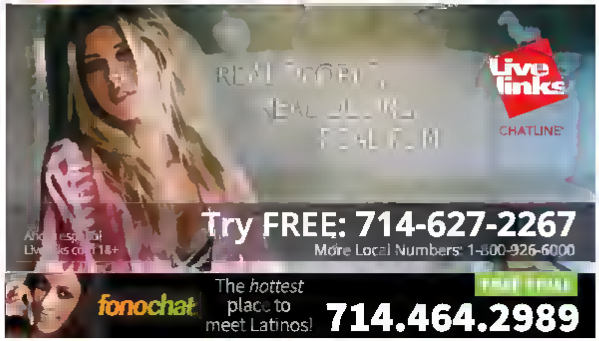
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CH2M Hill, Inc., Geotechnical Engineer, Santa Ana, CA. Geotechnical engg include planning, site characterization, design of facilities, & construction inspection. Mail resume to: Shelly Satta, CH2M HILL, 9191 S. Jamaica St. Englewood, CO 80112. Job ID 17-CA2102.

Senior SAP Solution Developer sought by Applied Medical Resources Corporation, a medical device dvlpr & mfctr (dsgn/dvlp/responsible for Full life cycle implmtn of Web DynproABAP). Bach's deg in Comp Sci, Mgmt Info Systems or related IT field or related w/ 5 yrs exp. Job loc: Rancho Santa Margarita, CA. E-mail resume to SAPCAREER@appliedmedical.com.

Clinical Research Coordinator (Anaheim, CA) Plan / coordinate clinical research projects based on clinical research objectives. Record/maintain clinical data in interventions (medications, medical therapy, devices, etc.) efficacy, safety, correlation & side effect. Analyze clinical data, evaluate research performance; assess eligibility of potential subjects through reviews of medical records, discussions with healthcare practitioners, and interviews. 40hrs/wk. Bachelor's in Healthcare or related req'd. Resume to Advanced Research Center Inc. Attn: Luo Yewei, 1020 S Anaheim Blvd #316, Anaheim, CA 92805.

195 Position Wanted

Market Research Analyst: Conduct market research to identify potential markets. Req'd: Bachelor's in Bus Admin, Econ, or related. Mail Resume: Game Cafe Services, Inc. 2152 Dupont Dr. Ste 280, Irvine, CA 92612.

Solar PV Designer
Design & manage Solar Photovoltaic systems. Req'd: BE/BS in Electrical Engr or Nanomaterials Engr. Mail resume: Wagen Solar Inc. 1511 E Orangethorpe Ave. #D Fullerton, CA 92831.

Veterinarian (Newport Beach, CA)
Examine animals to detect & determine the nature of diseases/injuries. Treat sick/injured animals by prescribing medication, setting bones, dressing wounds or performing surgery. Inform clients/owners about the general care and medical conditions of their pets. 40hrs/wk. Doctor of Veterinary Medicine & Veterinarian License in CA or All requirements for CA Vet. entrance Exam except SSN shall be satisfied. Resume to Companion Animal Medical Care Inc. Attn: Young Joo Kim, 5720 Campus Dr. #D, Newport Beach, CA 92660.

Sr Auditor: conduct audit, review & prepare reports; BA/BS in accounting. 40hrs/wk. Apply to: H&R Comp any CPAs and Consultants, Inc. Attn: HR, 111 Pacifica, Ste. 300, Irvine, CA 92618.

CLINICAL PHARMACOVIGILANCE DATA MANAGER sought by Integrium, LLC in Tustin, CA. Monitor the ongoing collection of clinical data informing the Drug Development Teams of any drug safety issues arising during and after conducting Clinical Drug Trials. Send resume to: Debbie Mason, Integrium, LLC, 14551 Myford Rd., Suite A, Tustin, CA 92780.

Director of Pharmacovigilance
(Job Location: Irvine, CA) Provide safety strategy to deliver benefit/risk profile; signal detection, evaluation, risk/benefit evaluation, risk management; ensure processing of expeditable adverse events; meets regl standard; manage PVG grp. Req'd: MD & 2 yrs exp. Send Resume to: Spectrum Pharmaceuticals Inc., 11500 S. Eastern Ave. STE 240, Henderson, NV 89052.

Software Engineer
ChasePay Inc (Irvine, CA) seeks a Software Engineer to analyze user requirements, develop & maintain product payment gateway service. Mail resume to: President, ChasePay Inc – 15440 Laguna Canyon Rd. Ste. 210, Irvine, CA 92618.

195 Position Wanted

Acupuncturist (Anaheim, CA) Diagnose patient's condition based on symptoms & medical history to formulate effective oriental medicine treatment plans. Insert very fine needles into acupuncture points on body surface / maintain related care. Apply herbal treatment, acupressure & other therapy for patient's specific needs such as back, neck, shoulder, knee pains, headaches, etc. 40hrs/wk. Master's in Acupuncture or Oriental Medicine, Acupuncturist License in CA req'd. Resume to: Unity Acupuncture Health Clinic Attn: In Chul Song, 5557 E Santa Ana Canyon Rd #207, Anaheim, CA 92807.

Computer Programmer
2 yrs w/k exp req'd. Send resumes to: Nexus Technologies, Inc., 2093 S. State College Blvd. #250, Anaheim, CA 92806. Attn: S. Rao.

ADMINISTRATIVE ANALYST
Review, evaluate, analyze admin issues & determine courses of action that include changes to admin processes. Analyze & interpret data & prepare reports. B.S. Bus. Admin./Mngmt., 40 hrs/wk., $27.58/hr. Send add'l resume to: Collins Salon Inc., Attn: Marlou, 3505 Long Beach Blvd. Ste. 2E, Long Beach, CA 90807.

SR. DESIGNER/ DEVELOPER, CLOSED-TOE FOOTWEAR sought by Rip Curl, Inc. in Costa Mesa, CA. Responsible for fashion design of a complete, well balanced and market leading closed toe footwear collection. Send resume to: Kelly Chunn, Rip Curl, Inc., 3030 Airway Ave., Costa Mesa, CA 92626.

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Engineering Manager in San Juan Capistrano, CA. Create detailed plans for the development of new products and designs, direct, review and approve project design changes. BS+5yrs exp. Mail resumes: Regatta Solutions, Inc., Attn: Job ID 6555.01, 27122 Paseo Espada #901, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675.

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Procurement Clerk. Prepare P/O & maintain purchasing files. Req'd: Any BA/BS. Mail resume: Global Engineering Corporation 6291 Beach Blvd #200 Buena Park, CA 90621.

Financial Manager (Yorba Linda, CA) Direct / coordinate financial activities of workers in the office. Prepare operational / risk reports for management analysis. Evaluate data pertain ng to costs to plan budgets. 40hrs/wk. Bachelor's in Business Administration or related & Min 2 yrs of experience as Financial Manager or related req'd. Resume to: KPI Healthcare Inc., Attn: Steven S. Minn, 23865 Via Del Rio Yorba Linda, CA 92887.

Employment

195 Position Wanted

Senior SAP Solution Developer sought by Applied Medical Resources Corporation, a medical device dvlpr & mfctr (dsgn/dvlp/responsible for Full life cycle implmtn of Web DynproABAP). Bach's deg in Comp Sci, Mgmt Info Systems or related IT field or related w/ 5 yrs exp. Job loc: Rancho Santa Margarita, CA. E-mail resume to SAPCAREER@appliedmedical.com.

System Integration Analyst (Tustin, CA) Develop, create, and modify computer software for efficient system integration and operation. Master's in Info System/Engineering related. Resume to: Woongjin Inc., 555 Centennial Way #200, Tustin, CA 92780.

PCB Design Engr (Job code: PDE-SR) Design & layout complex multi layer PCBs using Allium 18. Reqs: BSc+5yrs exp. Mail resumes to Boundary Devices, Attn: HR, 21022 Lake Pkwy, Ste 100, Lake Forest, CA 92630. Must ref job title & code.

Sr SAP MM Consultant, MS deg in CIS, IT, MIS or related & 7 yr exp. Exp. in Supply Chain Optimization. Skills: SAP MM, Tableau Reporting & Analysis, VBA, SQL, MS Visio, Six Sigma Methodology. Travel is/or relocation throughout the US req'd. Mail resume to Morris & Willner Partners, Inc., 201 Sandpointe Ave. Ste. 200, Santa Ana, CA 92707.

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Roots

Sticking with your history, from the Tamale Festival to the *LA Weekly* protest

BY MARY CARREON

There's nothing more important than staying true to your roots. How else are we going to stay grounded in this crazy, chaotic world in which a reality-TV star and con man is our president, the effects of global warming are decimating the planet one disaster at a time, and ***LA Weekly*** is being taken over by a nerdy weed lawyer and a fistful of right-wing dingbats? HELP!

Jamaican civil-rights activist **Marcus Garvey** once said, "A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots." I'm Guatemalan, Mexican and Irish, and aside from the fantastic Chicanx- and Irish-literature classes I took in college, I know nothing about my heritage except that people from these cultures are generally **Catholic**, like to drink and have been severely oppressed for hundreds of years.

My Guatemalan grandmother didn't teach my mom and her sisters **Spanish**, and my Mexican grandfather didn't teach my dad and his siblings *español*. In fact, both grandparents dropped their cultures to become more "American"—whatever that means. Thus, I grew up doing all kinds of Anglo things, despite being 50 percent Hispanic. We celebrated Christmas sans the tamales and *ponche*; I went to Catholic school in South Orange County, where I was pretty much the only brown girl. I don't know any Latin music (minus the **Gypsy Kings**) or dances. And we celebrated Cinco De Mayo as Mexican Independence Day; I only realized a few years ago that May 5 is actually when the Mexican army sealed an unlikely victory over the French forces of **Napoleon III** at the **Battle of Puebla** in 1862, so it's *not* their independence day. (I then informed my mom and dad of our collective idiocy.)

I've found myself rooting in other cultural ways. For example, *OC Weekly* and *LA Weekly* are the publications that gave me my start. Without my deep alt-weekly roots, it's likely you wouldn't be reading this column right now. I've also gone out of my way over the past five years to connect with my Latinx heritage. And the stars aligned last week in such a way that I dove into both. I went to the **Tamale Festival** in **Placentia**, and I protested the staff layoffs and horrid new ownership of the *LA Weekly* outside its **Culver City** offices. How often do you get to kill two birds with one stone like that?

I hopped aboard a school bus filled with hungry families at **Valencia High School** and was dropped off at the corner of **Santa Fe Avenue** and **Melrose Street**. A little girl with hair spouting from a barrette atop her head squirmed like a worm in her mom's arms as she screamed, "*Tamale! TAMALE! TAMALE! MAMA, TAMALE!*"

"Welcome to the Tamale Festival and *las pasadas*," read a sign at the entrance.

Santa Claus sat in a majestic red chair, with a line of borderline-hysterical children waiting to meet him, while the **La Ranchera 96.7** booth played jams that had people grooving in the street. A massive group of people circled a stage on which ***Chunelos*** danced, as people stomped and clapped. With their costumes, the Chunelos resembled masked animals with exaggerated, colorful hats topped with feathers and oversized garments that were a combination of a poncho and a dress. The tradition, which blends indigenous and Catholic customs, is popular in the Mexican state of **Morelos**.

I stood in line to purchase three chicken and three pork tamales from **Rafa's** (formerly **Rabalcavas**). The howling wind almost caused the vendors' canopies to catch flight.

The next morning, I prepared a breakfast of champions: a tamale and a waffle. I needed the extra strength for the protest held on the steps of *LA Weekly*. A white coffin with vintage covers of the *Weekly* inside sat at the entrance. Nearly 40 people stood around it while members of the **#BoycottLAWeekly** team gave eulogies to their beloved paper, which was massacred on Nov. 29.

"This is about our neighborhoods," former *LA Weekly* columnist **Jeff Weiss** told the crowd assembled. "This is about our community, and this is about an invasion. You've seen it at every level, and this is happening at the local level, and it's real. You can't ignore it."

In case you haven't yet heard, former ***OC Register*** geezer **Brian Calle** and *LA*-based cannabis attorney (who uses a 7-1-4 area code) **David Welch** purchased the *LA Weekly* with the help of many GOP campaign donors under the company name **Semanal Media LLC**. They laid off nine of 13 staffers and have since made an embarrassing spectacle of themselves. (You can catch up with our coverage at ocweekly.com.) The situation is shady, and we still don't know who all is involved with Semanal Media. But hundreds of people in Los Angeles are livid about the deal, thus the boycott.

Rebecca Haithcoat, onetime *LA Weekly* assistant music editor, addressed the crowd, saying the Semanal Media guys are depending on the boycott to back down and give up. The *Weekly*'s former senior music writer and longtime freelancer **Katie Bain** passionately spoke to the audience about how Semanal Media dissed the writers who provided coverage for years. "Don't forget how that makes you feel," she said. "If there's anything you don't forget, don't forget that they insulted you from the start."

As people protested, word got out that the only staff writer not fired by the new owners, **Hillel Aron**, agreed to be the interim editor-in-chief. Thanks to lots of people investigating the purchase, it's been revealed that Aron knew Calle before the purchase and knew he wouldn't be among those who lost their jobs.

The protesters could see people watching them from the third floor of the building. That's where the editorial department is located. But it doesn't seem as if they're doing much these days. It's sad to see a place where you had laid roots die. R.I.P., *LA Weekly*. We will miss you.

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R.I.P., LA WEEKLY

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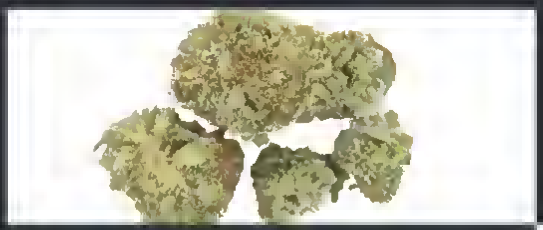

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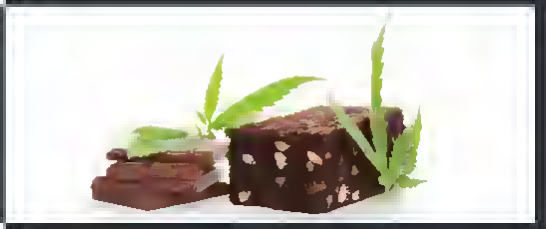

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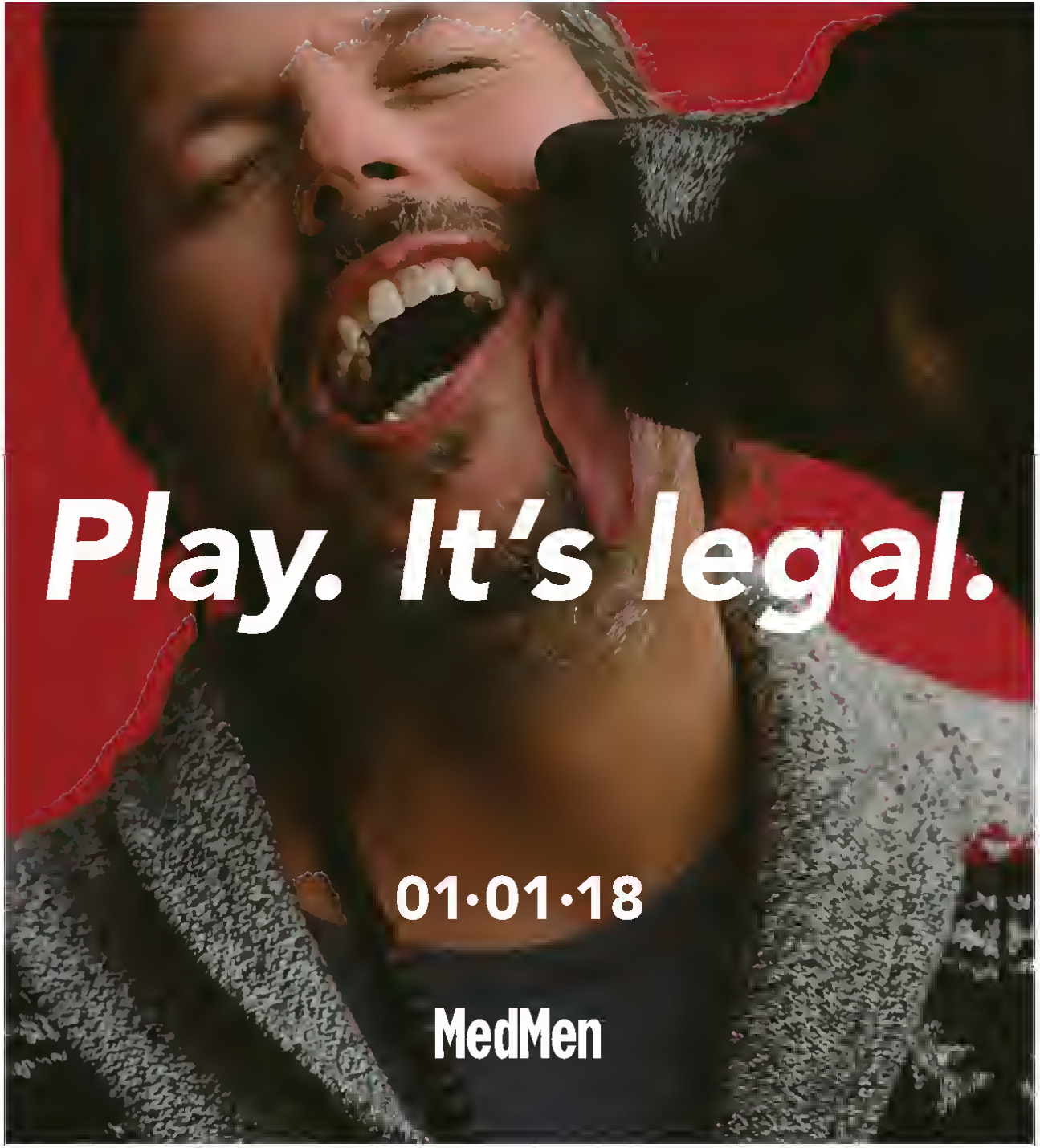
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